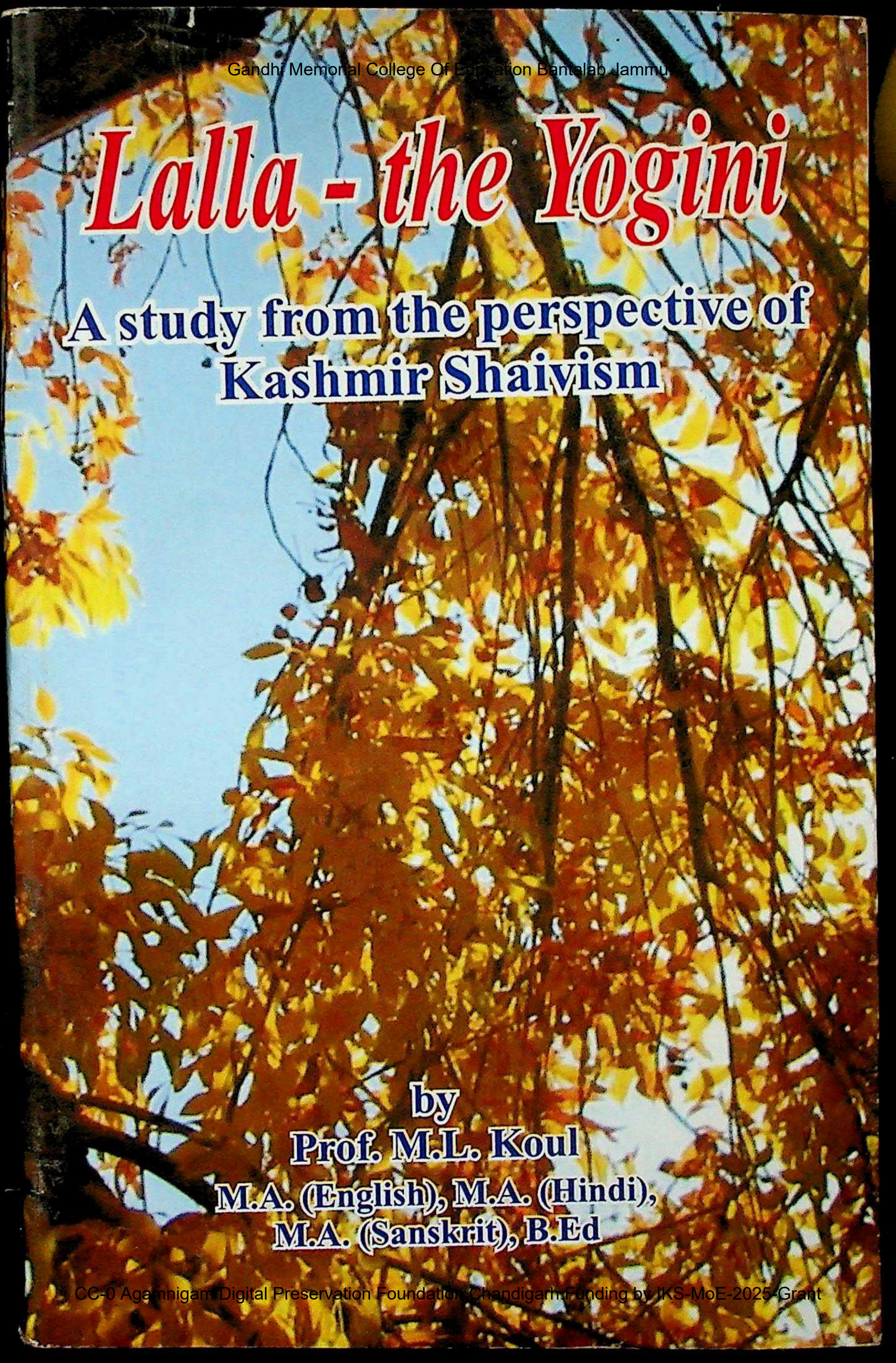


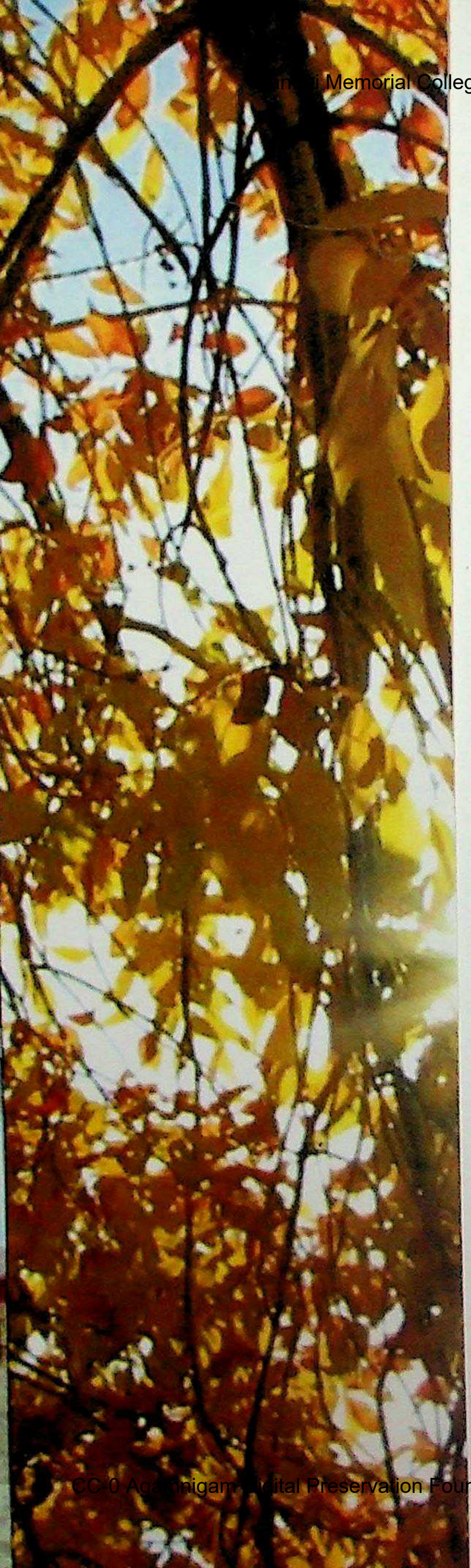
Lalla - the Yogini

A study from the perspective of Kashmir Shaivism

by

Prof. M.L. Koul

M.A. (English), M.A. (Hindi),
M.A. (Sanskrit), B.Ed



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Dedicated to my
beloved mother

Arundati Koul

who would sing
Lalla vaakhs
whenever she was beset with troubles &
tribulations
of this mundane world.

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Foreword

The essays written & compiled by Prof. Mohan Lal Koul on Lalleshwari, the remarkable poet of Kashmiri language, is an attempt to bring the debate on the Rishi tradition of Kashmir to a level of objectivity which has been absent in the study of the history and culture of Kashmir during the post-independence history of our country. Having spent a life-time in the study of the Rishi tradition of Kashmir, Prof. Koul has keenly analysed the vākhs of the poet with a view to bringing out the fundamental Sanskrit substratum of the vākhs & their spiritual insight, content & episteme. What emerges prominently from the treatment that Prof. Koul has given to the vākhs is to highlight & identify the basic philosophy that marks the 'epic soul' of the vākhs of Lalla-Ded & that is what sets it apart from the genre of the works on the subject aiming to locate the syncretic loops in her compositions. In the essays a serious attempt has been made to retrieve Lalleshwari's vākhs from the distortions they have been subjected to by the 'literary mullahs' through his emphasis on their Sanskrit content & spirit. The incisive assessment of the vākhs will certainly draw the attention of the lovers of Lalla-Ded & her soul-stirring vākhs to the philosophical & spiritual legacy that she was a heir to & also the spiritual experiences that she as a skilled poet has objectified through the use of an apt word & phrase.

Lalleshwari's vākhs are potentially rich to represent the pristine in the Sanskrit religious culture of India. The amazing depth of her comprehension of the philosophical issues of Kashmir shaivism as part & parcel of the over-all philosophical developments in India, her keen insight into the spiritual world of Hindu-India & her phenomenal imaginative capacity to converse to her people carve out a niche for her among the saints & seers of India who made serious efforts to save the Sanskrit content of the religious culture of the Hindus at a time when it was cruelly subjected to assaults from foreign subjugators of semitic hues.

I, for one, do not contribute to the view that Lalleshwari was a religious reformer. There are no credible evidences to establish that she made any attempts to re-define the contours of her faith or to prune it of the undesirable ingredients not in accord with its fundamental spirit. It is generally held that medieval period of Kashmir history was not the time when religious precepts & practices were subjected to any scrutiny, question or rational enquiry. It is absurd to say that Lalleshwari sought to relax the well-defined contours of her faith to frame & orient a new syncretic world-view. Her vākhs do radiate a deep desire on her part to fortify the core of Hindu religious tradition in view of the serious strains & convulsions that her faith & credos were being subjected to by the iconoclastic forces that had fraudulently gained a foot-hold in her native land.

It will be highly pertinent to put that Lalleshwari's vākhs did not in any manner form a bridge across the civilisational chasm between the Sanskrit & Semitic sociologies & life-world epistemes. Lalleshwari was a native of the land of vitasta, the two shores of which had been fecundly fertilised by the Sanskrit civilisational essence and flavour & its allied thought-processes and theoretical frame-works.

Lalleshwari lived through the most turbulent times of the history of Kashmir. There is a greater need to maintain a level of objectivity & methodological accuracy in appraising her immense contribution to the native tradition of Rishis deeply wedded to the all-prevading Sanskrit spirit. Koul in his essays has foot-printed the path in the same direction by uncovering the basics of her world-view & laid out a broad fore-ground for further research & enquiry into the same Rishi tradition replete with Sanskrit content & flavour.

It needs an emphasis that historical continuity is an over-riding feature of the Sanskrit civilisation. The Hindu religious culture, unlike other Semitic cultures, does not have a history of pagan past. Consequently, there is no elemental divide in the history of the Sanskrit civilisation of India which sharply separates it from its pagan antiquity. Lalleshwari's vākhs surely hall-mark the fundamental unity permeating the religious culture of the Hindu-India. The Nilmatpuran, the Mahatamyas, the bunch of Rajtaranginis, the Āgamas, the Shaiva philosophy & the ritual-structure & the Samskaras delineated by Laugakshi Muni, the whole oeuvre holistically highlight a stream of consciousness which is sanskrit in spirit & essence.

The Sanskrit civilisation of India systematically evolved over millennia from its formative beginnings in the Vedic age to its unfolding into the notable era of the upanishads, the Brahmanas & the whole corpus of Puranas. The Sanskrit civilisation encompossed the entire geographical boundaries of North-India with Kashmir as its crowning glory. The Harappan-Saraswat civilisational entrepot, distance wise, was in close proximity to the purlieus of Kashmir. As the cradle of vedic civilisation its ethos and powerful influences radiated to Kashmir resulting in its evolution as a pristine salient of the Vedic age.

Archeological excavations conducted at Burzhoma in the city of Srinagar have beyond doubt established the identity of proto-Aryan ethnicity of the natives of Kashmir & the natives of the Harappan-Saraswat culture-scape.

The Saraswati river as per the latest explorations is said to have dried up between 1800 B.C. to 800 BC due to the tectonic convulsions that caused a sea-change in the courses of its tributaries, Satluj & Yamuna. Till such vital changes happened, Kashmir had already evolved & flowered as a focal centre of Sanskrit civilisation. The Nilmatpuran provides credible evidence to the shifting of the Saraswat people to the north of India, especially Kashmir. It will not be a wild statement if it be said that the settlement of the Saraswat people in Kashmir impulsed the process of integration of the ritual-structure of Kashmir with that of the Vedic religious culture. By the time of the Mahabharata war, Kashmir had already formed well-defined social structures culminating in the institution of Naga Kingship as corroborated by the Nilmatpuran. It is in second century B.C. that Sanskrit people & folks of Kashmir evolved their Dharam Shastras that guided & regulated their religious life & social pattern of behaviour. It is during the rule of Karkotas that Kashmir had gained prominence as a flourishing centre of Sarvastivad, Buddhism, Agamas & philosophy of Shaivism. With the Nilmat-era coming to a close, Kashmir had already embarked upon the stupendous task of Sanskritisation of the Himalayas.

The approach adopted by Prof. Koul to appraise the vākhs of Lalleshwari underlines a frame of reference which in essentia is 'Sanskrit'. Writes he, 'the entire repository of vākhs as preserved through generations by our ancestors is a civilisational legacy. Now, a time has come that her word is under a vicious onslaught. Lalla-Ded's word was not just a fluke, but, it, in fact, climaxed the entire tradition of thought-process & aesthetics that was formed & perpetuated through generations. As a heir to the entire corpus of philosophy & ae,sthetics, she had full awareness of objectifying her experiences, lived & felt, through a word, apt & suitably contextualised'.

Furthering the strain, he writes, 'it is the word that explains her indigenous roots & unbreakable linkages with the civilisational impulse of the land she was born in. Her word is enriching, not only intellectually & spiritually but also geographically'.

Prof. Koul has emphasised the necessity of constructing a 'Lalla-Ded Lexicon'. He writes, 'to preserve & perpetuate the invaluable legacy of Lalla-Ded, I am attempting to prepare a sort of Lalla-Ded Kosa with a view to making her vākhs more intelligible to Lalla-Ded lovers & keeping the rootless & deracinated intellectuals & their proteges away from interfering with the word of Lalla-Ded'. The attempt as such is laudable as it lays bare the Sanskrit foundations of Lalleshwari's conceptual constructions & their practical realisation through spiritual praxes. The lexicon has a futuristic value as it can lead to the furtherance of research-based inquiry into the entire gamut of Rishi tradition with Lalla-Ded as it prime mover.

The most abiding part of Prof. Koul's study of Lalleshwari's vākhs is to re-but & repudiate all the attempts that have been made to de-link the vākhs from their Sanskrit roots with a view to emptying them of their content of civilisational import & value. Koul writes, 'Despite Kashmir being a mountain-girt valley, it broadly was a part & parcel of the territorial & cultural landscape of India. The excavations at Burzhom have authentically established that Burzhom man, a pit dweller, was racially & antropologically Harappan. It can, therefore, be deduced that kashmir had a protracted vedic age with its roots bed-rocked in the history & culture of Kashmir'.

He writes further, 'Despite manifest Tantric foundations of Kashmir Shaivisim, the Kashmiri thinkers remained within the ambit of the vedic tradition of showing their absolute allegiance to Vedācār &

vedic symbology of aum, Omkar, pranav. As per the vedic legacy, letters a, u & ma are deemed as referrals to Brahma, vishnu as satvas & Mahesh as tamas'.

The philosopy of Shaiva non-dualism could not have been conceived without the thought processes that had ontologically & epistemologically shaped in the upanishads, the Brahmanas & the Puranas forming as one corpus of perpetuated tradition. The recognition of the fundamental unity of the universal existence is essentially vedic in origins. Self-recognition (atma pratyabhijjna) as a central doctrine of Kashmir Shaivism echoes & carries the shade of the upanishadic dictum, 'atmanam vidihi'. Abhinavgupta, author of the monumental work 'Tantraloka', wrote a scintillating commentary on the Bhagvatgita. To quote Svestasvatra upanishad, 'He, who, at the beginning (of creation) projected Brahma (the creator, the primeval universal consciousness) & who delivers unto him the vedas, seeking liberation, I go for refuge unto the Effulgent one, whose light turns understanding towards the infinite Atman'. Abhinavgupta gave an eloquent expression to what was expressed in the Svetasvatara upanishad in his Bhairava-stotra when he wrote, 'Having become one with Thee, I adore Thee in the heart of my hearts, Thou art the first cause of projection, sustenance, & dissolution of the universe & protector of helpless. Thou art present in everything sentient & insentient, Thou art one with the Self, Thou art the only One without a beginning & an end'.

Tantras, whether dual, dual-cum-non-dual or non-dual, are basically

Indian in their origins & are riddled with precious Sanskrit content. Their philosophical flashes & theological perspectives coupled with spiritual praxes form a vital part of the Hindu world-view. Koul writes, 'With the theoretical knowledge scattered over the whole repository of the Tantras, the Kashmiri Shaivites wove their fabric of non-dual philosophy & finessed it as a thought-process through dexterous use of logical exposition & subtle analysis". Koul adds, 'the principal Tantras that the Kashmiri shaivites have commented upon & used as source-materials are Shiva-Sutras, Netra Tantra, Vijnan Bhairav, Malini Vijayotra Tantra, Rudra-Yamal Tantra, Mregendra Tantra & Svacchand Tantra'.

Lalleshwari had a thorough grasp of the Hindu scriptures, particularly the vedas, the upanishads, the Brahmanas & the Puranas. Without their deep study & thorough grasp she could not have been able to delve into the depths of Shaiva monism & its core, foundational concepts. Transcendence over value-relativism as a subject of philosophic exposition had touched its pinnacle during the epic period of Indian history. The abandonment of value relativism as a basis of spiritual quest, which followed the end of Mahabharta war, led to the emergence of a sort of logical positivism finding its expression in the nihilistic doctrines of Buddhism. The disappearance of the demarcating line between what was legitimately accepted as divine & what was not accepted as legitimately divine blurred the vision of the universal Reality that was presumed to be divine. The Shaiva philosophy of Kashmir evolved from where the line between divinely ordained & not divinely ordained, nearly vanished. Lalleshwari went beyond the Buddhist shunya. Says she —

Tseth gol tai kenh ti na kune,
Shunyas shunyah milith gava
(Chit was dissolved nothing remained,
void merged into the void).

Koul notes, 'Lalla Ded ardently worked out the Shaiva-yoga & the practices prescribed in it. A situation emerged when the external world appeared to get absorbed in her own self & the imbalance between subject & object appeared to disappear & all got merged into shunya (void). It is a stage in her spiritual evolution & not the situation in which she finally attained Shivahood. She even ascended the state of shunya, when she had felt that the world of name & form has risen to absorption'.

Lalleshwari had a deep insight into Shaiva darshan as a 'system of thought'. What stands her out from amongst many other masters in the domain is that she was a Shaiva-yogini. She was fully versed in the theoretical content of the said-philosophy with its core concept of self-recognition (atma-pratyabhijjna). She was actively engaged in the Shaiva praxes that ultimately led her to the attainment of self-recognition.

Writes koul, 'Lalla-Ded was a Shaiva-yogni with her gaze rivetted to the goal-post of atma-pratyabhijjna. Going through the mill of yogic practices under the tutelage of a prescient preceptor, she had stilled her 'chitta', purified it (chitta-samskar) & harnessed all the potentials of her psycho-physical frame to awaken her initiative processes for recognition of her intrinsic nature of Shiva. Through initiation & intellectual knowledge (baudik jnan) she was able to identify the deluding energies that wean away a man from the path of real knowledge & keep him entangled in dualities of the world. Lalla-ded transcended all that symbolises 'not-self' & what remained was her 'real self' which she recognised as her fundamental essence".

Lalleshwari was a realised soul. She had the spiritual experience of having attained the state of Shiva-consciousness through regorous yogic practices essential to overcome the limitations caused by dirts called malas.

Prof. Koul's essay on Lalleshwari and Bhakti brings to surface a hiterto unexplored dimension of her vākhs. To Lalleshwari, Bhakti was a tradition that Kashmiri Shaivities had accepted as a part of their spiritual heritage. Notes he, 'The Shaivites of Kashmir are essentially integrationists who have dialectically maintained the integrity of their non-dual thesis by giving legitimacy to the precepts & practices of bhakti & worship. Kashmir Shaivism has been appraised as more monistic than monism itself. Bhakti & worship do not in any way impair the tone, essence & unity of its thesis".

Lalleshwari was a Shaiva-yogni as well as a Shiva-bhaktin. Her vākhs reveal the basic mould & texture of a religious philosophy which envisions universal existence as an expression of the Reality that permeats it. Lalleshwari was never a mystic (sufi). Mysticism, be it said, is a semitised concept which stipulates a universal existence separate from the Reality that never permeates it.

Lalleshwari lived through the time when the Muslim rule was firmly established in Kashmir. She was a devout Shaivite, a yogini, committed to her faith. It is hardly possible that she would have been unaware of the cataclysmic transformations in the social & religious organisation of her native land. Nor could she have been un-affected by the vigorous campaign of proselytisation which the Shahmiri Sultans at the behest of the foreign sufis launched soon after they found themselves well-entrenched in the echelons of state power. They lost little time to institute a Muslim clerical order in Kashmir, a replication of the practice which the subjugators had instituted in India in the wake of its conquest. The clerical order turned into a very powerful instrument of subjugation of the vast masses of Hindus over whom the Muslims had assumed authority through their unmitigated enslavement.

An opinion has been expressed ad naseum that Lalleshwari was a poet who after the manner of general populace in Kashmir was sunk in her own feelings & experiences, mostly spiritual, which by & large did not reflect the stressful conditions of her natives. Even if it is conceded that Lalleshwari through the idiom of her vākhs gave expression only to her spiritual experiences & at the most reflected her personal alienation from her own social-setting on account of the abandonment that she had suffered, it is still unbelievable that she would have been impervious to the disintegration of value & belief systems & deep-seated traditions that she had cherished all through the course of her life & drawn inspiration from them. The available repository of vākhs from all sources amply establish her close and unbreakable bonds with Sanskrit tradition. Despite her profound sense of alienation, she stuck to her deities that she had worshipped all through her life & fortified her native identity which was under a serious onslaught under the Sultanate period that had trenchantly ushered in. The vākhs that were imbued with a deep feeling of resistance against the oppressive forces suffered an atrophy because of the political & religious repression that characterised the Sultanate period. It should be said without dither & hesitation that ancestors of the surviving Hindus who preserved the essential Lalla-Ded in their memory-plates found it safe to earn a reprieve from physical elimination by dropping the protest vākhs from their oeuvre. The poets in Jonraj, Srivar & Shuka are explicit & loud in lamenting the holocaust that the Hindus of kashmir had been subjected to by the proselytisers of foreign vintage. Lalla-Ded as a highly sensitive poet could never have been an exception. The vākhs that are available to us do have an over-flowing sense of lament, loss, pathos & protest if a discernible critic puts them to an interpretation beyond the parameters of spirituality & its delineated praxes.

Kashmir of the Lalleshwari's time was a part of the medieval India with its tradition-bound society governed by imperatives which drew their sanction from the religious culture of the Hindus. Lalleshwari's vākhs need an appraisal in the context of her people & their responses to the boiling transition which followed the rise of the Muslim rule harnessed to the end of upturning a civilisation & levelling everything in its way to consolidate its demographic changes. The collective mind of the Hindu community of Kashmir, which had lost political power & inherent freedom to live existentially & intellectually at the hands of foreign infiltrators, some as lays and some as learned, could not have remained un-affected with no respones and reactions to offer. As the infiltrators seeking refuge in Kashmir were sharia-bound, it is common-sense to presume that the Hindus were subjected to the rules & precedents of Sharia resulting in a holocaust for the natives. And Jonraj as a historian has graphically drawn it.

As a highly sensitive soul, Lalleshwari must have immediately recognised the conflict between the Shaiva-yoga that she pursued and the state policy of the Muslim Sultanate to enforce Sharia, the Islamic law & precedent. The Hindu belief system, ritual-structure, the forms of worship & idolatory as its essential sheet-anchors, were irreconcilable to the postulates of the semitic theology. To the foreign bands of Muslims, Shaivite philosophy & its allied Shaiva-yoga were nothing but the pagan legacy of Sanskrit civilisation. Lalleshwari did not gloss over the fault-line.

Lalleshwari composed her utterances in the local dialect to reach her people, the lowest & the last of them. Though not an ascetic, she like the Buddhist itinerants, moved among her people and recited her vākhs to them only to fortify their resolve to withstand the existential & cultural onslaught on them.

As suggested by the content of the vākhs it can be safely said that Lalleshwari defied the foreign proselytisers who imposed sanctions through the idiom of Sharia on the subjugated Hindus. Her fearless restatement of the indigenous cultural capital & episteme founded on the postulate of Shiva as the sole Reality pervading the universe & all that exists in it sent a message to the foreign rulers & their Sharia-masters that their religious positions & hegemonic claims were not acceptable.

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Chapter – 1

THE CONCEPT OF SUNYA FROM BUDDHISM TO KASHMIR SHAIVISM TO LALLA DED VAAKH

All credible evidences from the annals of Kashmir history establish that Kashmir was a pivotal centre of Buddhist thought and learning. To counter the narrow philosophical positions of Hinyana Buddhism it was in Kashmir that the doctrinal positions and theoretical mould of the Mahayana Buddhism were formulated and shaped out. A galaxy of Buddhist scholars of great eminence who were Kashmiri in their origins or had settled in Kashmir from other parts of India contributed their speculative faculties to the enunciation of the contours of Mahayana Buddhism and enriched its thought-content by shaping out its structures. All concerted efforts were made to disseminate the thought to a number of countries beyond the margins of the native country. The Mahayana thought in its debate of Reality, Soul and Human destiny had marked features of synonymity with the mainstream thought of India.

Mahayana thought over a period of time branched off into two thought divisions of Madhyamik and Vijnanvad. In the pages of Buddhist thought Madhyamik is also designated as Sunyavad because of its core philosophy about sunya. Nagarjun[1], a great celebrity in the realms of Buddhist thought, founded the Madhyamik school through his work named as 'Madhyamik-

Karika'. In his seminal work Nagarjun rejects the idea of an object existing or not-existing permanently or temporarily. He as a way out sought for a mean or middle-path (madhyam marg). Being an expert dialectician he searched for causes for things that were existing. His postulations were startling as the world for him did not exist and was nothing but void and emptiness. Things that exist are inherently lacking in substance. Anything that depends on a cause to exist has no existence and reality of its own[2].

In the words of stcherbabsky, "A dependent existence has no existence, just as borrowed money is no real wealth."

The mainstream Indian philosophical thought was wary to accept the stipulations of Nagarjun and characterised it as a philosophy of voidism or nihilism. All affirmative schools of thought put the thesis of Nagarjun to a scathing criticism and dismissed it as destructive.

It was Dr. T.R.V. Murti who in his highly acclaimed work, Buddhism[3], gave a new orientation to the very concept of Sunya as propounded by Nagarjun. He forcefully argued against those scholars who had interpreted sunya as voidism, emptiness or sheer nihilism. As per Dr. Murti, Nagarjun never thought of sunya as voidism, emptiness or nihilism. He places Nagarjun's sunya at par with Brahman in Vedanta, or Vijnan in Vijnavad. Sunya, to him, is a metaphysical reality or a metaphysical concept. As Madhyamik is absolutism, Dr. Murti calls sunya its metaphysical reality.

Dr. Murti maintains that sunya is a being that lies behind the world of relativity and conditioned existence. As a metaphysical being it is neither relative nor conditioned. He further states that the world is sunya because it is relative and has no independent existence of its own.

'Sunyata' is another concept that is popular with the voidists. The critics of voidism understand it in the sense of negation. But, it, in fact, means negation of all views and even its own view.

Despite the wide-spread range of Buddhism in Kashmir, the popularity of Shiva's worship and many broad conceptualisations about popular religion never ceased to be. Being the most tolerant religion of the world religions, Buddhism was never in conflict with other forms of religions and their variegated methodologies of worship. Though a popular creed in Kashmir, Buddhism with its non-soul doctrine and sunya-like nihilistic conceptions failed to appeal to the spiritual impulse of Kashmir. The result was the churning of an affirmative strand of thought that evolved as a reaction to the formulations of the Buddhist thinkers. With Shiva as its core concept the new thought drew upon the philosophies of Sankya, Vaishnavism and Buddhism to weave its own harmonised pattern planked on non-dual structures. As a monistic absolutism it re-cycled the old metaphysical and epistemological issues and evolved a new approach and premise to yarn its world-view logically and coherently. Sunya as a vital Buddhist concept was appropriated, and was oriented in a manner that appeared absolutely at variance with its original Buddhist trappings and semantics.

The non-dual thinkers wedded to Shaivism put the Buddhist thesis of sunya to a thorough and incisive debate in all its ramifications. What emerges from the contours of their debate is that sunya as a metaphysical concept can be acceptably accorded the same position that Brahman in Vedanta has. They appear to have no serious objections to place sunya even at par with Vijnan in Vijnanvad. But, they have far-reaching reservations to treat sunya at par with the metaphysical Reality of Shiva who has the pre-eminent attribute of 'Svatantrya', which is perfect freedom to act and know[4]. Because of the attribute of 'Svantantrya', Shiva is 'Chaitanya' and sunya is lacking in this essential attribute. So, they evaluate sunya as a lower level of reality which they are unable to accept as the absolute Reality that Shiva encompasses.

The Shaiva thinkers seriously object to the voidist position of rejecting the world as emptiness or void. The world, to them, is neither insubstantial nor momentary. In their thought-model Shiva pre-exists as a being and Shakti is His becoming and their unicity is the absolute reality. If Shiva is real, so is His Shakti. As per logic, that what is real will generate or emanate real. Real generating or emanating unreal is logically preposterous. The Shaiva thinkers are loud in their assertion that world and objects in the world are real as they are one with the light of consciousness. If they were not to appear or illumine in the light of consciousness, they would not exist at all.

The non-dual shaivites are unanimous in rejecting the Buddhist thesis of mometariness as it reduces all manner of experiences, fleeting and abiding, to mere nothingness. As emphasised by them, the concept of momentariness dismisses all possibilities of making judgments and establishing contact through expression and communication.

In the annals of philosophy it is well-known that no new thought is totally new. What appears as new retains ideas, concepts and stipulations from what is dismissed as old and jaded. The non-dual thesis of Kashmir Shaivism as already mentioned has strands from Shaiva Siddhant of South of India, Sahajyani Buddhism, Sankhya and varied philosophies of Vaishnavism. Sunya as a concept has been incorporated from Buddhism, especially its variant called Madhyamik. The Shaivite thinkers have modified sunya to reinforce and strengthen their own philosophical positions and fundamental thesis of monism. The Buddhist meanings and trappings of sunya have been totally discarded and given a new orientation in sync with the core philosophy of non-dual Shaivism. The very definition of sunya has been altered as 'shunyam ashunaym iti ukhtam' which in translation means 'shunya is said to be ashunya'. It is not an inexplicable riddle. The definition makes it clear that sunya is not void or emptiness. What we call sunya does contain something lying in a state of total dilution.

The Shaivites translate sunya as 'abhava', which when broken up becomes 'a + bhava' meaning Shiva and world or objects lying in His consciousness. Sunya, to them, is in no case a condition as what the Buddhists call void or emptiness. Sunya is what the Shaivites call 'sad-bhava' which marks the presence of world or objects, but in a state of total mergence.

The following verse explains the Shaivite position on sunya:-

ashunaym shunyam iti ukhtam, shunyat abhava uchyate,
abhava satu vijnyeyo yatra bhava layam gata[5]

It conveys that sunya is asunya, not the condition of sunya, void or emptiness. Sunya means abhava (in translation), which again means a state in which objects (bhavas) lie in a condition of absolute mergence (in Shiva's consciousness supreme), the objects are there, but not in their name and form, but in a state of absolute dilution indistinguishable from Shiva's consciousness supreme, also called 'maha-vyom'.

SUNYA IN THE VAAKHS OF LALLA DED

Lalla Ded had a strong theoretical knowledge of the tenets of non-dual Shaiva philosophy of Kashmir. She was fortunate enough to have a preceptor (guru) like Sidda Srikanth, popularly known as Syada mol, who happened to be in the line of the tradition of Shaiva acharyas. Besides theoretical studies, Lalla Ded, as demanded by the thought itself, was initiated in the Shaiva praxis by the same preceptor. As her spiritual experiences reveal she was put on the path of higher ascension to achieve Sivahood through the Shaiva-yoga which her venerated preceptor had introduced to her dose by dose, step by step.

Lalla Ded as a Shaiva practitioner happened to experience some such states where she felt that she neither belonged to the world of objects nor had the spiritual flashes that would have satiated her yearnings of attaining identity with Shiva. Such of her conditions are termed as sunya which every initiate has to experience while working out Shaiva praxis under the guidance of a Shiva-guru, a realised soul.

After rummaging all the available verions of Lala Ded's vaakhs I was able to find out seven vaakhs in which Lalla Ded has made an explicit mention of sunya, a state she had to experience before achieving the state of self-recognition. She was an ardent follower of the Shaiva precept of 'Shivo Bhutva Shivam Yajet'.

Lalla Ded ardently worked out the Shaiva Yoga, the practices prescribed in it. A situation emerged when the external world appeared to get absorbed into her own self and the imbalance between subject and object appeared to disappear and all got merged into sunya (void). It is a stage in her spiritual evolution and not the condition in which she finally attained Sivahood. She even ascended the state of sunya when she had felt that the world of name and form had risen to absorbtion. What was left was the state of anamaya which in Shaiva parlance means the condition of supremacy of the luminosity of consciousness supreme carrying the stir (spand) to create and absorb. The experience intensely felt by Lalla Ded has been grippingly conveyed in the vaakh:

'abhyas savikas layi wothu
gaganas saghun myul samistrata!
Sunya gol ta anamaya motu
yuhuy wopadesh chuy bata !!

By oft-repeated practice, the wide expanse
of manifested universe is lifted to absorbtion;
And the Sagun World, of forms & qualities,
merges in the vastness of the void
with a splash of water falling;
Then the ethereal void dissolves,
and the ineffable supreme alone remains.
This, O Bhatta, is the truth to gain.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Being aware of the entire upanishadic oeuvre of literature Lalla Ded has woven a superb allegory to explain the three functions of Param Shiva who creates, maintains and assimilates the universe. For the purpose she mentions Shiva who is the horse, Keshav who is the saddle and Brahma who is the sitrrups. The horse in the allegory is the 'trigunatmac horse' and Param Shiva alone having the attributes of 'anahat, kha swaroop, shunyalai' is capable of riding it.

Anahat, Kha-Swaroop, Shunyalai, aham-vimarsa and nada-binda have philosophical meanings and need be studied in the light of the thought Lalla Ded was thoroughly cultivated by her preceptor.

As per the Shaiva texts Bindu is the undifferentiated, luminous and eternal consciousness supreme. Nada is the Shakti, the potency to manifest what lies in the Bindu. Bindu expands from Chitta-kala to anand-shakti, Iccha Shakti, Jnan Shakti and Kriya Shakti.

Many unrelated meanings have been attributed to anahat. What Lalla Ded means by anahat is related to Bindu and Nada. Anahat is 'pranav', Om, an unhindered and eternal sound, which is Bindu when in a state of unity with Param Shiva and Nada when in outward expansion.

Kha-swaroop and shunyalai are the attributes of Param Shiva who is beyond time and space and is the abode of sunya which means that in the consciousness of Shiva the world of objects lies in a state of total mergence.

Lalla Ded conveys:

Anahat Kha-Swaroop, Sunyalai
Aham-Vimarsa Nada Byand Yas Von........

He who is the eternal ‘anahat’,
The ever-unobstructed sound of Om,
Whose is the all-permeating form
of the eternal sky;
Whose dwelling is the vast transcendent void;
Who has no name, caste, gotra, nor form,
Who is pure, undifferentiated self-awareness,
Who is ‘Nàda-Bindu’, the logos & the light
He is the god who mounts the horse.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

As a Shaiva practitioner Lalla Ded merged her two breaths, prān and apān, into the Sushmana-nadi, also known as madhyanadi, which is considered as having a sunya-like condition. She realised that the outward world had ceased to be for her and the state of duality was not a reality. In this psychic condition of having broken with the outward world she experienced a new state of having lost her not-self, which till then she was under the delusion of taking it as her real-self. With this experience as her sheet-anchor she felt that the lotus of self-luminosity was about to unfold and bloom.

The following vaakh conveys the same felt-experience :

Sunyuk madan kodum panas
mea Lalli roozam na bodh na hosh
Vazay sapnis panai panas
ada kami hili phol Lalli pamposh !!

I traversed the vastness of the void alone,
leaving behind me reason & sense,
Then came upon the secret of the self;
And, all of a sudden, unexpectedly,
in mud the lotus bloomed for me.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Kashmir Shaivism is a philosophy of positive affirmation and has in no uncertain terms rejected all forms of asceticism. Lalla, as evidenced by her vaakhs, has lived a life of high moral values in which avaricious greed, lust and insatiable gluttony have no place. Greed, lust and indiscriminate indulgence in pleasures of gluttony signify attachment of an individual to the things that he takes for his real-self. That is why Lalla says that 'vain imaginings' are to be abandoned and petty desires are to be slain. It never means that she is preaching for any form of asceticism. Her emphasis is to abandon any form of attachment that encases the real-self of an aspirant. Lalla exhorts to concentrate on Shiva, which will pave an aspirant's way to the attainment of a state where he will get merged in Sunya, a name for transcendental Shiva in which the world and its objects lie in a condition of absolute dilution. The following verse is meaningful in this context :

Loob marun sahaz vetsarun
drogu zanun kalpan trav !
Nishe chuy ta duru mo garun
sunes sunyah milith gauv !!

Realisation is rare indeed;
Seek not afar, it is near, by you,
First slay desire, then still the mind,
Giving up vain imaginings;
Then meditate on the self within,
And lo! the void merges in the void.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Before Lalla Ded achieved her spiritual state of self-recognition she had followed many a course to act out its efficacy and usefulness in achieving her destination. She had studied Tantras[6], especially Bhairav Tantras and the practices prescribed in them.

She utilised all her learning from them and took to mantras, worked them out and marched ahead. She felt that what she had achieved through Tantras and Mantras was that she had purified her chitta, limited form of chitti, consciousness supreme. After purification of her chitta, which was there but was free from the disturbances brought about by subject-object relationships, Lalla Ded attained the state of an aspirant, who has attained a loftiness of spiritual hue and is in ecstasy where nothing remains, but her own self stripped of all malas of attachment and duality. She in this lofty state merged into sunya, transcendental Shiva in whom the world of objects remains submerged in an undifferentiated form.

Lalla Ded sings :

Tanthar gali tai manthar motse
manthar gol tai motseyi chyath !
Tseth gol tai kenh ti na kune
sunes sunyah milith gauv !!

Let go the sacred tantra rites,
only the mantra sound remains,
And when the mantra sound departs,
only the chitta is left behind.
Then, lo ! the chitta is gone,
And there is nothing left behind;
The void merges in the void.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Sunya, to Lalla Ded, has come from the non-dual thought of Kashmir Shaivism which in turn had appropriated it from

Buddhist thought. As a superb poet she sang it in vaakhs couching her intensely-felt experiences. Being a philosophical concept, Lalla Ded communicates the states of sunya that she had experienced during the course of her spiritual evolution. She is a great poet because she makes her felt-experiences the stuff of her verse-sayings. Her poetry is great because she is philosophical in what she conveys and pours out.

Chapter – 2

THE REALITY OF SHIVA FROM KASHMIR SHAIVISM TO LALLA DED VAAKHS

The Shaiva thinkers of Kashmir structured their thought model on the fulcrum of Shiva as the highest metaphysical reality. Shiva is synonymous with consciousness supreme. *'Chaitanyam atma'* as formulated by *Acarya Vasugupta* invests the Shaiva thought with such a distinguishing feature as marks its divergence from other variants of absolutism. Chaitanyam as formed from *chetna*, as per Khemraj, marks the absolute freedom of consciousness supreme or Shiva to know and act. It is the state of I-ness (*aham*) and in no way impairs the absolute reality of Shiva. Though an active agent in the processes of creation (manifestation), Shiva is perfect, and transcendental. He is self-proved (*svata sidda*) and needs no logical pramanas to prove and establish His existence.

Besides being svata-sidda, Shiva is *prakash*[1], light of luminosity and *Jnan*, all-knowing, everything known to Him. Prakash also underlines Shiva's transcendence and equipoise in the state of transcendence. Shiva as against Vedantic Sat, Cit, Anand is only Cit and Anand. It is His Kutasth-Svarup. His luminosity is His Prakashrupta and Anand is His gushing out (*Uchhalan*) to act out the *vilas* (sport) of creation. Shiva has no taints of limitation and succession. He is beyond *Vikaras* (deformities). He is the first and the last cause of the manifestation. Prior to emergence of His Divine Will to manifest what is inside Him to Himself, the universe with all its diversities lies in Him in a state of submergence. In his monumental work *Tantralok*, Abhinavgupta conveys the same position of Shiva which is commented upon as –

'sa cha svata-sidda prakashatma parmarthrupa parmeshvar Shiva aiva'

Shiva is not only Prakash but Vimarsa also[1]. Vimarsa, as per Dr. Jaidev Singh, is the sciring of Shiva's own consciousness[2]. Vimarsa is Shakti, the nature of Shiva. It denotes Shiva's power to act. As per Shaiva texts diamond is prakash, but it is absolutely deficient in knowing itself as prakash. But Shiva knows Himself as prakash. Various names have been given to Vimarsa. It is Kartritva, Svatantrya, and Parashakti. Had Shiva been prakash only the universe would not have appeared. It is because of Vimarsa that Shiva manifests the universe on the screen of His own consciousness. All that we find in the universe is an abhasa and each abhasa is self-expression of Shiva. What we find outside in the universe is inside Shiva only – *yad antastad bahir*.

The Shaivite monists of Kashmir have taken a different position on the *Vedanic* stand-point of *Vivartvad* which means imposition of world on Brahman through ignorance (*avidya*)[3]. To justify their non-dual position they assert that Shiva through his Svatantrya-Shakti imposes world on Himself through His own *maya*-Shakti. The *Vedantists* are afraid that if Maya is taken as the Shakti of

Brahman, it means dragging Brahman into the world of impurity. Had they taken such a position on Maya as the Shakti of Brahman, their Brahman would have metamorphosed into Shiva of Kashmiri thinkers. Unlike the Vedantists the *Shaivites* do not negate the world to reinforce the metaphysical reality of Shiva. When Shiva is pure luminosity (prakash), which is the sheet anchor of all *abhasas*, He is transcendental. When He is immanent in the world, He is Vimarsa. Shiva is an active agent in manifesting the world. He is the first and final cause of the manifested world[4].

Shiva and Shakti, to Kashmiri thinkers of monism, are not two separate entities or polarities. They are one and only one. When Shiva through His divine will wants to see what is inside Him, He is Shakti. Had he no will-power to manifest Himself to Himself, He would have been inanimate and life-less (Jada). Shiva's Svatantrya lies in willing, knowing and acting. Shakti is the potency of Shiva to create the universe. His divine activities are known in Shaiva parlance as His *Kriya*. Activities of willing, knowing and acting are not His Vikaras (deformities) as is the case in *Vedanta*. Kashmiri Shaivites take Jnan and Kriya in combination. Their position is not that of Vedanta which holds Jnan and Kriya as two separate categories, one cancelling the other. Shiv is Kriya, the universe that He creates (manifests) is His doing. His Kriya does not taint the purity of His being. Shiva is *Maheshvar* (Lord), not because of His prakash or Jnan, but because He acts to manifest the universe. His lordship is in His manifestation of the world. Shiva is both transcendental and immanent[5].

Shiva performs five acts (panchkretya). He creates, preserves, withdraws, obfuscates and showers grace (*anugrah*). His five-fold acts define Shiva's Svatantrya (absolute freedom). In Svacchand Tantra we have –

srishti samhar kartaram vilai sithiti karkam
anugrah karam devam pranatarti vinshanam

It needs be emphasised that Shiva as the sovereign lord has no compulsions to commit five acts. He has no lag for the filling of which he performs five-acts. He is all perfect and *purna*. His inherent nature of being purna and perfect gets in no way impaired by His act of manifestation of the phenomenal world. He creates but has no purpose to create. His creation and creative impulse underline His svatantrya to do anything. He creates out of anand which establishes His *Vilasa* of Lordship (*maheshvariya*). In his celebrated work *Shiva-strotravali utpaldev* sings that Shiva steeped in His *ananda* imagines diverse objects of the world out of His free-will just for leela (sport). In *Paratrimshikha* Abhinavgupta writes that the vibration of Shiva's anand is the universe.

'*Akul*' & '*Kul*' are two agamic terms that have oft been used to denote Shiva and Shakti. 'Akul' is Shiva who is synonymous with consciousness supreme. 'Kul' is the Shakti that creates the universe[7]. These two terms have come to non-dual *Shaivism* from *Kaulachar*[8] that was practised at many places in India.Their meanings have been retained by the Kashmiri thinkers. In *Paratrimshika* Abhinavgupta has extensively dealt with the terms of 'Akul' and 'Kul', one denoting the transcendental Shiva as consciousness supreme and the other as the Shakti of that consciousness tending to create.

SHIVA IN LALLA-DED VAAKHS

Lalla Ded Vaakhs are deeply soaked in Shiva-consciousness. The attainment of Shivahood is her ultimate destiny. Initiated in the Shaiva praxis by her preceptor, Sidda Srikanth, Lalla Ded devotedly and single-mindedly worked out the *upayas* (methodologies) that her celebrated preceptor had introduced to her. Her Vaakhs lucidly reveal that she is fully aware of the real svaroop of Shiva. She sings out that Shiva is Chidanand, Cit and Anand, Jnān and Prakāsh. Cit is the consciousness supreme which is the source of life and universe and anand is the gushing out (*Ucchalan*) of that consciousness supreme. She also sings that Shiva with whom she has to gain identity is Prakash as He illumines in His own light, celestial light and is Jnan as He is all-knowing.

As Lalla Ded was a Shaiva Yogini she had experienced the luminosity of Shiva's consciousness through a relentless pursuit of Shaiva trajectory. She had not just shone in His Prakash as Muslim mystics would in the light of God, but she was an inalienable part of that luminosity and was totally soaked in it. As her Vaakhs convey she had intensely felt the condition of getting merged in the luminous state of Shiva's consciousness, not merely speculating, but expressing her felt-experience in a language that objectifies that experience, though subtle and nebulous. Being one with Shiva's Prakash and Jnan, His entire mass of divine consciousness, Lalla had risen to the status of one who was liberated while living. She had no confusions and dilemmas of an *anu* (*Jiva*) who is tossed about in the dualities of the world.

Lalla Ded sings –

Chidanandas Jnan prakashas
Yimav Chyun tim zeevantai mokhta
vishaymis samsarnis pashyas
abodi gandah shyat-shyat ditya.

They who have known the Supreme self
(compact of the Bliss of Pure Consciousness
and light of Knowledge Absolute) –
They are Jivan-muktas (who,
while alive, have found release
from ever-recurring birth and death)
The ignorant add knot to knot, in hundreds,
to the tangled web of Samsara,
its recurrent birth,
its recurrent death.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Shiva is a creative agent. He can be likened to a painter who delineates the universe on the canvas of His own consciousness. When He creates, He is the Shakti. He and His divine consciousness pervade the universe, whether animate or inanimate. From man to everything living to dead objects have immanence of Shiva. He is not like a monotheistic God who creates the world and leaves it alone and the two never meet. But, contrary to it, Lalla Ded holds that the created world finds its ultimate destiny in Shiva's consciousness supreme. Lalla Ded says–

Gagan Chaya Bhutal Chay
Chay Dyan Pawan Ta Rath

Thou art the earth, Thou art the sky,
Thou art the air, the day and the night;
The sacrificial corn Thou,
And the unction of the sandal-paste,
Thou art the water, Thou art the flowers,
Thou art all these and everything.
What may I, in worship, bring to Thee ?

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Lalla Ded knows the inherent nature of Shiva, who is anahat, pranav, unhindered sound of oum, kha-svarup, shunyalia, aham, I-consciousness, bindu and nada and as pure consciousness has no name and form, caste, colour and gotra. She was aware of the trajectory that she had to warily follow to attain mergence into the pure consciousness of Shiva, wherein the stir of creativity lies undifferentiated from the vast ocean of that consciousness. As an initiate she had to practise prān-apān to pacify her chitta (mind) from kshob (disturbance) brought about by currents and cross-currents of diverse thoughts. She had to pass through states where there would be a void or support-lessness and also flashes of illuminating consciousness uplifting her from the crippling limitations that had bound her as a jiva. Shiva, to her, is the only deity that qualifies to ride the 'trigunatmac' horse as put in the allegory.

Lalla Ded's Shiva is –

anahat kha-swarup shunyalia
yas nav na varan na guthur na raef
aham vimarasa nada bindai von
sui deeva ashwa war chyadyas

He who is the eternal 'anahat',
The ever-unobstructed sound of Om,
Whose is the all-permeating form
of the ethereal sky;
Whose dwelling is the vast transcendent void;
Who has no name, caste, gotra nor form;
Who is pure, undifferentiated self-awareness;
Who is Nada-Bindu, the Logos and the Light -
He is the God Who mounts the horse.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Lalla Ded was in full know of her human condition. She was a Jiva beset with an enormous web of limitations. Her Shiva has six attributes which He can harness at His mere Will with nothing to restrain Him. He has the attributes of sovereign power (maheshvariya), omnipotence (sarva-kartritva), Omniscience (sarvajnatritva), allinclusiveness (purnatva) eternality (nityatva), and all-pervasiveness (vyapaktva). What essentially distinguished her from Shiva is that He masters His in-built attributes while she was in a state of servitude to the limitations that had enmeshed her.

Lalla Ded pours out –

yimai sheya chya timai sheya meya
shamgala chaya byan tatis
yohai byan abeeda chya ta meya
chya shyan sami ba sheyi mushis

O Lord of the Dark Blue Throat,
I have the very same six Thou hast,
And, yet, estranged from Thee,
I suffer misery.
There surely is this difference;
Thou art the master of the six,
By the six I have been robbed.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Shiva is transcendental, beyond the confines of time and space, but He is equally immanent, present in everything He incessantly creates on the screen of His own consciousness. His is not the case of a semitic God who creates the world and withdraws from it for fear of losing His unity. Shiva creates all the world of animates and equally creates the world of inanimates. A dead stone also has the spark of His creative consciousness, but the spark is slightly weak. Whatever appears in the world is within the ambit of His all-pervasive consciousness.

Lalla Ded Conveys the immanence of Shiva –

Shiva chuya zavul zal vahravith
kranzan manz chuy tarith kyath

Like a tenuous web Shiva spreads Himself,
Penetrating all frames of all things.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Shiva as prakash or in transcendence is rest, equipoise and perfect equilibrium. He brims with anand (bliss). The panoramic universe that He incessantly opens out and draws in as a matter of sport (Leela) is His garden where He deilghts in the flowers of smell, taste, sight, sound and touch. The multifarious diversity that Shiva creates is His act of lordliness and it in no way disturbs His poise and tranquility. Lalla Ded as a yogini living in the flowery world of smell, sight et al is so well-poised in her awareness that she sees Shiva in the world, yet beyond the confines of the world as a perceptible garden. She is at a station where she is absolutely content and joyous having dips in the ever-gushing nectar of Shiva's consciousness supreme. She calls such dips as 'dying' because it is a state of mergence. Lalla Ded sings :

Lala ba chayas suman baga baras
vuchum Shivas Shakhat meelith ta vah

laya karmas amryat saras
tati maras ta karyam kyha

I, Lalla, entered by the garden-gate
of mine own mind,
And, there (O Joy!) saw Shiva with Shakti
sealed in one;
And there itself I merged in the Lake
of Immortal Bliss
Now while alive I am unchained
from the wheel of birth and death,
What can the world do unto me ?

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

It is a matter of common observation that water as an element under freezing conditions gets frozen into snow and ice. When the sun shines upon snow or ice, it gets melted, back into the state of water. The element of water, the process of getting frozen and snow or ice, though sequentially three in number, are essentially one. Water as the basic substance under a freezing process turns into snow or ice. Similarly the fundamental fluid of Shiva's consciousness having a stir of creativity in a submerged condition assumes varied forms under the willing impulse of Shiva Himself. Diversity as we find in the multi-faceted universe is eternally one with the creative consciousness of Shiva. It is an eternal process of opening out (unmesh) and withdrawing in (nimilan).

Lalla Ded sings out –

Turi salil khot ture
himi trai gayi byan abyan vimarsa
chyatani rava bhati sab samai
shiva mai charachar jagpashya

When water freezes in the cold,
it turns into snow & ice.
Reflect, O man, that one becomes
three different things;
And then the sun shines, the three
melt into one again.
So, when the sun of pure consciousness shines,
The world of living & lifeless things,
the universe & whatever exists,
are, in the Supreme, seen as one.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

The frightful and ominous clouds of bigotry and intolerance had enveloped the skies of Kashmir when Lalla Ded was treading the native land of Kashmir. The forcible conversions with the aid of Muslim state power had already kick-started. In her trenchant exhortation to the alien hordes of Sayyid-Sufis acting as sappers and miners of Islam she clamours out the immanence of Shiva and the need to follow the path of self-recognition as crux of Shaiva Darshan to see essence of Shiva in men of all faiths :

Shiva chuya thali-thali rozan
mozan hynd ta musalman
trukhai chyukh pan praznav
soya chai shivas saet zani-zan

Shiva abides in all, everywhere;
Then do not discriminate between
a Hindu and a Musalman,
If thou art wise, know thyself;
That is true knowledge of the Lord.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Chapter – 3

GURU IN KASHMIR SHAIVISM AND GURU IN LALLA DED VAAKH

In the annals of Kashmir Shaiva-praxis a guru (preceptor, spiritual director) has been accorded a distinguished stature of respect and reverence for the part he plays in initiating and guiding disciples in spiritual trajectories. High-level spiritual attainments and exemplary wisdom alone are the titles of a guru. A siddha purusha, a perfect soul, is what a guru is. Such a soul alone is qualified to have disciples whose spiritual destinies he shapes and moulds through Shaiva practices or his personal grace (shaktipat).

Guru in Shaiva parlance is Shivaguru or sat-guru. He is Shiva, acts as Shiva or at the behest of Shiva. A devotee or his disciple bows to him in absolute supplication for having set him onto the trail of Shiva and cultivated him into a frame, a pre-requisite to recognise his pristine nature of Shiva.

In his highly acclaimed commentary on Shiva-Sutra Khemraj informs that a guru is one who teaches Reality or Truth[1] and is the means to leading one to the attainment of the potency of 'mantra & mudra'. In spand-karika Bhatta Kallat eulogises his guru for the benediction of ferrying his boat across the ocean of doubts[2] through his illuminating teachings. In

Malinivijay Tantra a guru is described as one who fully knows the essentials of thought (Kashmir Shaivism) he is wedded to and throws light on the power of Mantras[3].

In the same Tantra a guru is said to have power of grace (parmeshvari anugrahika shakti). If pleased with his disciple, a guru reveals to him all the hidden truth about 'matrikacakra' which exactly as per Shaiva thought is Shiva's manifestation of the universe from the first letter 'a' to the last letter 'h' comprising Sanskrit string of letters.

No knowledge without a guru (guru bina na jnanam) is a cliched statement underpinning the vital significance of a guru in the attainment of Jnān which is Shiva-consciousness.

A guru as an embodiment of spiritual knowledge and radiance is extra careful of not impinging on the over-riding sense of self-worth and self-image of a disciple.

A guru in the manner of a psycho-analyst peers through the mind (chitta) of a disciple, measures his level of consciousness and his intuitive quality to recognise his pristine nature of Shiva and puts him on the highway of quest. A Shiva-guru is more than aware that his disciple either a 'muud' (inferior in consciousness) or 'su-prabuddha' (superior in consciousness) has a sense of autonomy.

Without impairing it he cognises it as a positive factor contributing to his spiritual advancement. Keen to awaken his disciple to the inward reality of 'self', a guru replenishes and reinforces all what his disciple has as it is deemed fundamental to 'self' and its cognition. Concerted effort on the part of a guru is to expand and broaden his sense of self-worth, self-image and autonomy which, nodoubt, are limited and inhibited because of his conditioned existence of an 'anu', a bound jiva.

A Shiva guru, even if a monk, assiduously prepares his disciple for the world and the life that he lives. He in no way commands him to robe himself after the manner of a recluse (sanyasin). He tastefully sublimates, refines and tempers the attitudes and proclivities of a seeker for a balanced mind which acts as a receptacle for flashes of Shiva-consciousness. The microcosmic body along with its multiple senses and potentialities is harnessed and not suppressed as a Shiva-guru is for affirmative view of life and world. A seeker remains in the world, a meshy layer of dualities, and gains an insight into his original nature of Shiva right in the world. No prescriptions are there to abandon the world and live the life of a recluse.

What concerns a Shiva-guru most is that he moulds his disciple in sync with his cultural bequest and cultural setting. He roots him in the indigenous soil he is a product of and reinforces his linkages with the same roots. His icons are native, his gods are native, his holy places are the Shiva-dhams littered over the whole terrain of his native place and his world-view belongs to him as a valuable legacy.

He worships water flowing in the vitasta and his logic is not rock-hard as is found in desert cultures. A Shiva-guru firmly rooted deep down in his native soil enriches and fertilises the broad swathes of spiritual way of life through his teaching and preaching based on catholicity of outlook and broad values of humanism.

To him, Shiva is the world and the world is Shiva. It is a philosophical position which shocks the believers of rock-hard logic that narrows the space for pluralistic ways of life and pluralistic ways of thought.

A guru as an expert in the Shaiva academics expands the intellectual horizons of his pupil, sharpens his thinking abilities and leads him with an awakened mind and brain to attain his spiritual destiny of Shivahood. A constant interaction between a pupil and his guru is the mechanism through which a pupil learns about metaphysical issues along with their complexities and intricacies and removes cobwebs of his doubts and misunderstandings and the guru lucidly exposits all the fundamental issues of the thought-model he actually symbolises. All the line of Shiva-gurus from Vasugupta to Bhatta Kallat to Somanand to utpaldev to Abhinavgupta and last but not the least Swami Laxman Ji Maharaj have been remarkable theoreticians of Kashmir Shaivism.

Scholarship and Shaiva-Yoga have been two facets of all the Shiva-gurus. Jnān (knowledge) and self-recognition (spirituality), to them, have not been dichotomous & discordant.

A Shiva-guru is essentially a man of culture. His aesthetic faculties are sharp and tempered. Invested with profound knowledge of the whole spectrum of heritage he revitalises and refurbishes it through an interactive process of imbibing and interiorising the reigning values and critically analysing and evaluating them. Revitalisation and perpetuation of the contours of native culture is the leit motif of a Shiva-guru.

Abhinavgupta, a profile thinker and siddha-purusha was an exemplary aesthete. Having thoroughly studied aesthetics as a component of the extensive mosaic of Indian culture at the lotus feet of his erudite guru, Tota Bhatt, he made a precious contribution to the realms of aesthetics through his path-breaking commentary on Anandvardhan's 'Dvanyalok' from a Shaivite perspective.

A guru, in sum, is an aesthete and deals with the finer stuff of beauty. Most of the Shiva-gurus have been deep-set lovers of music, drama, dance and poetry and used them as resource to share the finest aesthetics of Shiva as the source and repository of beauty.

Much like six systems of Indian philosophy Kashmir Shaivism is not only a logically structured model of thought but also contains a whole range of practices for the realisation of spiritual destiny of a seeker. Shaiva-Yoga what Kashmiri Shaivites call it is a regimen of practices for all types of seekers having individual differences. Guidance and initiation of an accomplished Shiva-guru or satguru is a must for all types of seekers at various levels of consciousness.

A Shiva-guru unhesitatingly showers grace[4] (shakhtipat) on an aspirant who is extremely awake and has intuitive ability to recognise his real svaroop (nature) of Shiva. His mere look at the aspirant works as an alchemy that melts his dross (malas) encasing him and frees him from knots and complexes that bind him as an 'anu' or 'pasu'. A guru's grace on such an aspirant is without reason and logic and totally un-asked for. A guru's shakhtipat (grace) on an aspirant means his mergence (samavesh) into Shiva-consciousness.

Such grace for mergence into Shiva-consciousness is known as 'Shambhvi' grace. Khemraj puts in his commentary on Shiva-Sutra:—

> *akinchit chintakasya guruna pratibodhata, Jayate yah*
> *samavesha shambhava asau udahritah*

Deficient in inspiraion and intuitive faculty a Shiv-Guru puts such an aspirant to a regular and uninterrupted practice of knowing his innate reality. He is taught and directed to imagine himself to be Shiva only and that alone as his reality.

A sort of auto-suggestive technique this type of Shaiva-Yoga is known as shakhta-yoga, bhavana-yoga or chitta-sambodh yoga.

— Malinivijay Tantra writes :-

uccar rahitam vastu chetsa eva vichintayan
yam samavesham aapnoti shaktah so atra abhideyate

An aspirant innately having a low level of consciousness and steeply mired in the gross stuff of the world is prescribed anava-yoga. A Shiva-guru in view of his deficiences and lags introduces him to a regimen of prāṇāyam (breathing exercises) and dyān, concentration on an icon, a mantra or a syllable. Such practices raise his level of consciousness so as to motivate him for higher levels of methodologies for attainment of mergence (samavesh) into or identity with Shiva.

A guru is a liberator, uplifter and path-finder of the aspirants who are intensely motivated to pursue the path of spiritual quest. He is a crutch to those who are lacking in Shiva-consciousness. A guru, more than most, is a vital link between a seeker and his ultimate destination. His relations with his pupil are the same that we witness between a father and his son. Ved Vyas labelled as 'vishal buddhi' typifies a guru. 'Vyas purnima' as a commemorative date stands enshrined in the calender of Kashmiri Pandits, which is nearly 5000-year old. A guru in reality is Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh.

GURU IN LALLA DED VAAKH

As revealed by her treasure-trove of Vaakhs it can be said with certitude that Lalla Ded had intense spiritual sensibilities which were tapped for final fruition by her guru, Sidda Srikanth. A name in Shaiva thought and Shaiva Yoga, Sidda Srikanth was the family guru of Lalla Ded. In the style of a Shiva-guru he had continuous sessions of debates and discourses with her with a view to sharpening her philosophical clarity on issues relevant to the Shaiva thought. Lalla Ded flumoxed her guru when she boldly re-interpreted 'prakash'-luminosity, tirth-holy place, 'bandhav'-real kins and 'sokh' a pleasurable feeling in a manner that completely contradicted the valued views that he had harboured on them. It was sufficient to convince Sidda Srikanth of the philosophical mould and acumen of Lalla Ded.

In one of her extra-ordinary discourses with her guru Lalla Ded unequivocally conveys that Sidda Srikanth was a man of omniscience, had recognised his Shiva svaroop (real nature) and was possessed of calm and collected mind. She begged of him to give her refuge and anchorage as she was God-consumed quite keen to merge into the ocean of Shiva's bliss. She also drew his attention to the evanescence of time and implored him to initiate her and others present at the time of debate withou loss of time. Says Lalla Ded (*Syada mali syado syada katha kan thav kal ava kuthan ta kariv kyaha)*. In a candid vei Lalla Ded conveys that she pestered her guru ruthlessly t explain to her the nature of the 'Nameless' and in the proces got tired and exhausted. Then she conveys her impression tha the 'nameless' is the source of something (universe) which lie submerged there in the consciousness of Shiva in a undifferentiated form.

gwaras pritsham sasi late yas na kenh vanan tas kyah nav
pritshan pritshan thachista loosas kenh nas nisha kyah tam
draw !!

A Thousand times my guru I asked
'How shall the Nameless be defined?'
I asked & asked but all in vain.
The Nameless unknown, it seems to me,
is the source of the something that we see.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

There are ample internal evidences available from Lalla Ded Vaakhs that she through her regular interactions with her guru, Sidda Srikanth, who is parmeshwar to her, allayed her doubts and misgivings about metaphysical issues and Shaiva-yoga praxes. She implores him to teach her (grinati updishati tatvikam artham iti guru) the secret about prān and apān and as to why one is hot and the other is cold though both rise from the same abdominal region. says Lalla Ded :-

he gwara parmeshwara bhavatam cheya chuy antar vyud
dwashivai whopdan kandpura ha-ha kwa turn ta
ha-ha kwa tot.

O Guru, you are as a god to me,
Tell me, you know the secret truth.
Both Pranas rise from Kandpura,
'The place of the Bulb', the navel region,
Why is hah hot, why is huh cold ?

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Prān and apān are the two lexical words in all versions of Yoga. But, Lalla Ded during the interaction is prompted to know about the Shaiva meanings of these two lexical words. In Shaiva Yoga the lexical word 'chandrama' denotes the breath emerging from outer dwadashant moving towards 'hridaya' and the breath emerging from inner dwadashant (hridaya) moving towards outer-dwadashant.

The first is apān-breath and the second is prān-breath. The breath moving outside (prānvayu) is naturally hot. It is at the 'hridaya' that apān-vāyu halts and prān-vāyu emerges.

In the same way it is at the outer-dwadashant that prānvayu ends and apān-vāyu emerges. Both prān and apān vāyus are the gross forms of the original all-pervading 'pranshakti'.

In his classical work 'Ascent of Self', Prof. B.N. Parimoo has characterised the said-vaakh as a soliloquy, posing the question and answering it herself. But, the author after due thought does not agree to the view of Prof. Parimoo. The second line of the Vaakh – "bhavatam cheya chuy antar vyud" is significant which surely conveys that she wants her guru to express (bhavatam) his own considered views on the Shaiva-Yoga meanings of prān-vāyu and apān-vāyu as he has thorough experiential knowledge about the breathing processes.

Lalla Ded having undergone numerous sessions of discourses with her Shiva-guru for awakening and sharpening of her Shiva-consciousness was finally imparted 'diksha' which in the words of Ram Kanth, a noted Shaiva scholar of Kashmir, is a sort of consecration ceremony only to initiate one into the higher life, bestowing on the initiate the boon of self-knowledge and casting away the dirts due to a sense of difference. (swaroopasambodhadanatmako bhedamayabandha - ksapanalaksansca samskarvisesah)[5].

Lalla Ded had diksha, an initiation through a 'vachan", which means a word (vachak pad) embedded with denotative meaning (vachya). The embedded meaning as conveyed by the line (nebra dopnam andar acheun) is the reference to the senses as shackles (pása) which are to be withdrawn from the outside world for attainment of Shiva-consciousness.

Though Lalla Ded has used 'mantra' in many a vaakh, yet in the Vaakh under reference she uses 'kunuy vachun' which stands for Mantra comprising impregnated letters or symbols as pointers to 'ahanta', I-consciousness of Shiva. What Srikanth did with Lalla Ded through 'kunuy vachun' or Mantra was to direct her mind (chitta) to 'ahanta', I-consciousness of Shiva. In Shaiva Yoga mantra is the main shakhtopaya for self-recognition (pratyabijjna).

The 'kunuy vachun' or mantra deeply impacted her psycho-physical frame throwing her into a convulsion of joy and ecstasy (tawai hyutum nangai nachun).

The vaakh reads as –

gwaran dopnam kunuy vachun,
nebra dopnam andrai achun,
Sui Lalli gava mea vakh ta vachun,
tawai hyutum nangai nachun.

My Guru gave me but one precept.
'From without withdraw your gaze within
And fix it on the Inmost self'
Taking to heart this one precept,
Naked I began to roam.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

The word of Shiva-guru which is a mantra, divine power clothed in sound, coupled with the ritual of cleansing of her body and mind with the holy waters of Ganga as the symbol of absolute purity led Lalla Ded to attain Shivahood while in life, thereby conquering the gnawing fear of death.

Sings Lalla Ded –

gwara kath hridayas manzbag ratam
ganga zala navum tan ta mann
Sodih Jeevan mokhtai provum
yama bhayi cholum polum arat

Motivated with a deep sense of responsibility unto others Lalla Ded declaims that absolute trust and faith in the word of Shiva-guru, his mantra, the ever-fleeting mind under the control of

Jnān (Shiva-consciousness), the outward directed senses completely pacified and calmed are the gateway to final bliss (anand) surmounting the existential fear of death and anybody generating fear by putting a man to death.

Says Lalla Ded –

gwara shabdas yus yach patch bare
gyan vagi rati chyath torgas yandrai shomith
anand kare adakus mari bai maran kas.

He who has faith in Guru's word,
And with true knowledge for the rein
Guides aright the steed of mind,
And holds his senses under control,
'Tis he enjoys the peace of mind,
He will not die, nor be slain.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

The internal evidence of the vaakhs does not buttress the view that Lalla Ded's case was that of 'guruna pratibodatah', generating 'samavesh', mergence into the ocean of Shiva-consciousness, characterised as 'shambava upaya'. What I have gleaned from all versions of Vaakhs is that her guru had mapped her ascent step by step and stage by stage. She had tried the methodologies of 'anava yoga' which stress measures like prānāyām, concentration (dyān) on some form of icon or any other symbol as suggested to her by her venerable guru and pilgrimages to holy places for purification of mind and body. Because of her deep sense of 'loss and pain' as a result of the ship-wrecked married life Lalla Ded must have suffered deep pangs (ksob) corroding her mind (chitta). So, taking up the anava methodology was necessary to pacify her mind and steadily she must have been led to adopt 'shakta' methodologies to develop a frame necessary for further ascent of being one with Shiva.

Chapter – 4

AUM IN INDIAN SCRIPTURES, KASHMIR SHAIVISM AND LALLA DED VAAKH

Writes Paul Tillich, 'In religion no one can avoid use of symbolism nor should one wish that it were possible to do so. The more lively a religion, the more complex its symbolism has to be, for it is thus it secures what protection it can get against the ever-present danger of literalism which is fatal to the life of any religion'.

Rigveda as the oldest record of human civilisation is replete with its own slew of symbols and motifs that potentially express its broad mosaic of myths, theology, thought-flashes and religious reflections. ***Aum*** is the dominant divine symbol that fully reflects the Rigvedic essence and weltanchuung. It symbolises the Reality that has been a deep concern of man since his inception on the earth

As a religious symbol ***aum*** signifies a Reality that is transcendental, omnipotent, omniscient and infinite, yet it suffuses all that is manifest in nature. All Rigvedic gods are nature-gods, representing forces pervading the wide panorama of nature.

As per the Indian tradition ***aum*** is the first fundamental sound that burst out of the throat of ***Brahma***, the creator, when he began to give utterance to the Vedic learning embedded in His lotus-heart. Aum as the first word is considered highly auspicious (*manglik pada*). Swami Dayanand Saraswati, a brilliant scholar of Vedas, states that ***Aum*** is the most excellent name of God. It is composed of three letters, *a,u & m* which in turn represent many names of God. The letter a represents gods like *agni, virata, & vishva*. The letter u represents gods like *vayu, tejas & hiranyagarb*. The last letter m represents gods like *ishwar, aditya and prajna*. The *vedic mantras* sung in praise of multiple gods begin with ***Aum*** as the Divine Reality[1].

In the Prasnopanishad, the ever-curious Satyakam asks *Rishi Piplad* an array of questions about ***Aum***, mainly about the merits which a devotee achieves when he meditates upon it. He is told that ***Aum*** is an all-comprehensive sound-symbol of Brahman, the Reality, that is both beyond the universe and immanent in the universe. If meditated upon as a blend of three letters, *a, u & m*, a devotee will come to behold the Macrocosmic-self residing in his own heart.

As per *Kathopanishad*, ***Aum*** is the word that all *vedas* expound. It is the destination of all forms of meditation. *Kath* characterises *Brahman* as the Imperishable and ***Aum*** as the supreme support. If a devotee knows ***Aum*** as the support, he obtains an exalted position in the *Abode of Brahman*.

Shvetashvatar Upanishad says that ***Aum*** as an object of meditation will lead a devotee to the destination of *Brahman*.

Chandoyya Upanishad proclaims ***Aum*** as an object of meditation. It calls *Aum* a spiritual charm. *Brahman* is to be worshipped through ***Aum*** as a means to attain the Immanent and All-pervading Brahman

In the *Taittịrya-Ụpanishad*, ***Aum*** is equated with Brahman. It is all and everything (*oum iti Brahman*, *oum iti sarvam*)

In the *Bhagwat-geeta* Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, who was smitten by serious doubts, that He (Lord Krishna) is the *rasa* in water, luminosity (prakash) in the *sun* and the *moon* and *omkar* in the vedas[7]. He again tells him that the vedic scholars know the highest Reality as *omkar*[8]. Lord Krishna also tells Arjuna that a man who gives up his mortal coil while uttering the divine akshar ***aum*** & mulling over its embedded meaning attains *His Abode*[9].

As conceived by the vedic seers ***aum*** has continued to dominate the spiritual and philosophical discourse in India. It remains the dominant symbol that shapes and moulds the broad contours of the Indian spiritual way of life. ***Aum*** is not just a sign, but a potential symbol which as per Paul Tillich 'participates in the reality that it represents'

Throughout the chequered history of India and the cruel rule of Muslims and Christians ***aum*** has provided a spiritual succour to the oppressed people and has continued to find resonance in the 'collective unconscious' of the natives of this ancient land.

As a spiritual beacon it has been paving the trail of men in quest of spiritual sublimity for making human life more meaningful and more purposeful on the earth. *Aum* enshrines a sublime value that Hindus assiduously pursue to touch a horizon where any shade of difference between them and the ultimate Reality fades. It represents catholicity, breadth of vision and holistic outlook on man, world and Brahman. It embodies the spirit of '*vasudaiva kutumbkam*'.

AUM IN KASHMIR SHAIVISM

Despite Kashmir being a mountain-girt valley, it broadly was and continues to be a part and parcel of the territorial and cultural landscape of India. The excavations at Burzhom have authentically established that the Bruzhom man, a pit-dweller, was racially and anthropologically a Harapan. It can, therefore, be deduced that Kashmir had a protracted vedic age with its roots bed-rocked in the history and culture of Kashmir. *Aum* as a valued spiritual legacy dominated the spiritual paradigm and spiritual trajectories in Kashmir. It could not be dislodged from the spiritual pedestal even after some trend-setting Tantric motifs and symbols were introduced by Kashmiri Shaivites who wove a perfect network of thought from the strands that had come all the way from south of India to Kashmir, renowned as Shardapeeth.

Despite manifest Tantric foundations of Kashmir Shaivism, the Kashmiri thinkers remained within the ambit of the vedic tradition by showing their absolute allegiance to *vedāhchār* and vedic symbology of *aum, omkar, pranav*. As per the entrenched vedic legacy, the letters *a, u & m* are deemed as referrals to *Brahma* as *rajas*, *vishnu* as *satvas* and *mahesh* as *tamas*.

A dot (bindu) above ***aum*** symbolically indicates *Param Shiva* or *Param Brahma* or *Brahman* transcending the world of sense-objects. ***Aum*** is taken as an eternal, un-hindered sound, *anahat nad*, ever vibrating in the heart of man. It has been linked with *bindhu & nada*. when ***aum*** or *pranav* is in a state of unity with Shiva or consciousness supreme, it is *bindu* and when it expands into manifest forms *neel*, *peet & sukha*, it is *nada*.

Aum is bindu in un-manifest form and it is *nada* in manifest form. The entire word-hoard (*shabad rashi*) owes its genesis to the eternal, un-hindered sound, ***aum***, or *pranav*. ***Aum*** if taken as *para-vak* represents universal ideation which is the matrix of all sounds. It as the first sound is not manifest. It remains in a state of mergence in the consciousness supreme. But, it is astir, throbbing and not in a state of stagnation. When the process of ideation begins, it is *Pasyanti*. It is just a nebulous idea without form. It all happens in the creative consciousness of Shiva. When the idea takes on a form in His consciousness, it is *Madhyama*, this-ness, idea has taken a form. Finally, the idea takes a definite form and shape, it is manifest. It is called *Vaikhuri*, a manifest expression, gross word in verbal form[10].

In his erudite commentary on Samb-Panchashika, Khemraj conveys that ***aum*** as the eternal inaudible sound throbs incessantly in the heart of man. It is the *para-vani* from which emerges Pashyanti, which is impregnated with form-less words and further expands into other layers of words with forms gross.

The verse reads –

Aum iti antar nadati
niyatam yah prati prani shabdo
Vani yasmat prasarti
para shabadatanmatra garba[11]

Kashmir Shaivism holds that Supreme consciousness or Shiva is beyond the physical world, grants liberation to seekers while living, creates the world of objects and is the foundation of three vedas and is known as *pranava*, having a unique-type of self-reflection enabling an aspirant to realise his own true nature (svarup) of Shiva.

The verse reads –

Yatra aaroodam trigunvapushi Brahma tad bindu rupam
Yogindranam yadapi parmam bhati nirvanmargah
tryi aadhar pranav iti yat mandalam chand rashme
antah sukhshyam bahirapi brahan mukhtaye prapanah[12]

Aum, to Jagdhar Bhat, a thirteen century poet-scholar of Kashmir, is the combination of three morases (matra) of *a,u & m* and is the eternal inaudible sound, which is the matrix of the entire word-hoard and goes on pulsating within the heart of all.

The verse reads –

Aum iti safurad urasya anahatam
garb gumfita samast vankhmayam
dandhvneeti hrat param padam
tat sat akhsharam upasaemahe[13]

As per the Kashmir Shaivites the triad of *a,u & m* refers to many triads of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*; *Iccah*, *Jnan* and *Kriya*; *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and subject, object and praman[14] (proof).

In his scintillating commentary on Bhagwat-geeta, Abhinavagupta writes that the inaudible word (*anahat shabad*) that is audible only to the seekers is the nature (*svarup*) of the ultimate Reality. He equates ***'aum'*** with the consciousness supreme that embodies the universe within its matrix in an undifferentiated form.

AUM IN LALLA DED VAAKH

Though a Shaivite to the core, Lalla Ded as revealed by her vaakhs was initiated into the world of Shiva through the *bija mantra*, ***aum***, by her venerable guru, *Sidda Srikanth*. To her, the manifesting word of Shiva or Brahman is ***aum*** or *pranav* (Lord of living beings).

Repetition of the word, ***aum***, was the key that proved efficacious in the processes of concentrating her mind as a first step to march ahead on the spiritual journey that she had assiduously embarked upon.

She was a seeker, an instinctive seeker who meditated upon *aum* reflected upon it as the most sacred syllable of the three vedas rik, sam and yajur and immersed herself in the Shaiva-Yoga praxe to cognise her pristine nature of Shiva.

Lalla Ded was highly aware of the great spiritual significance o ***aum*** as the vedic symbol. She had come across ***aum*** as delineate in the *vedas* as the crux of vedic learning and vedic spiritua praxes. She clearly says that she had read only one word ***'aum*** as the essence of Vedas and then placed it in her mind throug its regular recitation with single-pointedness. To her, ***aum*** wa the spiritual charm beyond which she felt no necessity to see for other means. ***Aum*** as a bija mantra metamorphosed he from ashes into pure gold.

Omei akuy achur parum Sui ha malie rotum vondas manz
Sui ha mali kani peth garum ta charum asus sas sapdas
sone

I, Lalla, got absorbed in the bliss of ecstasy,
by recitation of single letter Om with concentration of mind.
I made strenuous effort to give the letter pitch & loudness
with the result critical effect was set free, which resulted
in the attainment of enlightenment, that is from ashes
I have been transformed into pure gold.

Translation by B.N. Sopor

To Shaivites *aham* is the most powerful mantra that leads a seeker to spiritual fulfilment. But, to Lalla Ded, ***aum*** is the mantra that alone works for any seeker. She has concentrated and meditated upon it and it is through this mantra that she established a bridge between her microcosmic self and macrocosmic Reality. The fact very well known to Lalla Ded is that the eternal, un-hindered sound, ***aum***, throbs in the heart of every man. What is needed is only to concentrate on it for higher ascendence.

Lalla Ded says –

Akuya omkar yus nabhi dare
kombuya brahmandas somai gare
akuya mantra yus chyatas kare
tas sas mantra kyaha zan kare

He in whose navel constantly abides
none other than the one Omkar,
Who builds a bridge between his own
and cosmic consciousness,
By making mind one with this mighty spell
What need has he for a thousand other spells ?

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

As Lalla Ded marched upon the spiritual path step by step, She had to work out various methodologies at various stages to tune and temper herself to the consciousness supreme. In the course of her Shaiva praxes a stage came when she got merged into the essence of ***aum***, that is Shiva-consciousness, and had a feeling that her body got blazed like a red-hot coal. It is a spiritual feeling, quite nebulous and Lalla Ded has objectified it through the metaphor of red-hot coal based on her observation in the world. It is a stage that seekers reach while in pursuit of *Shaktopaya*. She gave up the six paths of *varna, mantra, pada, kala, tattava* and *bhuvan* as prescribed in the Shaiva methodology and embarked direct upon Shambhava-yoga (sat marg) for complete mergence into the Shiva-consciousness, symbolised as 'prakashasthan'.

Says Lalla Ded –

Akuya omkar yali layi onum
vohee korum panun paan
shya vath travith sat marg rotum
tyali Lalla bo vachas prakashasthan.

When I became one with the Supreme Word,
My body blazed as red-hot-coal,
Then I gave up the path of the six
and betook myself to the straight true path.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Chapter – 5

YOGA - IN INDIAN SCRIPTURES, KASHMIR SHAIVISM AND LAL DED VAAKH

Yoga is the metaphor of Indian spirituality. It has history as old as the Himalayan mountain ramparts guarding the civilisational frontiers of India. The statue of a yogi in *dhyan mudra* as a rare find from the archaeological sites of Mohenjodaro (now in Pakistan) sufficiently testifies to *Yoga* as an ancient practice of the ancients. The broad oeuver of Indian scriptures from *vedas* to the epics, to the philosophical Geeta, to the *Puranas* and all streams of literary works are pregnant with copious references and details that surely establish the enormous antiquity of *yoga*. *Patanjali,* a rishi of the highest order, wrote an elaborate treatise on yoga delineating its semantics and mundane and supra-mundane ideals. *Patanjali Yoga* is 'more an enunciation of esoteric practices for self-realisation than a frame-work of coherent philosophy'. During its evolutionary process *yoga* got appended to the Sankhya thought for philosophical anchorage. Being essentially a spiritual discipline, all schools of thought accepted it for practical realisation of their purported philosophical goals.

Philologically, *yoga* as a word owes its origin to the root *'yuj'* which means to unite, to join or to hyphenate. Panini, a brilliant grammarian of India, traces the word yoga to '*yuj samadhav*', to '*yuj yoge*', to '*yuj samyame*'. The consensus among the Indian rishis is that yoga implies to unite, to yoke or to hyphenate the individual soul with that of the universal or macro-cosmic soul.

Patanjali, the systematiser of *yoga* as a spiritual discipline, defines it as suppression of the mind's activities and proclivities[1] (*yogash cha chitta-vrati nirodah*). It is also called *yoga samadhi (yogah samadhi)*[2]. Lord Krishna, decked as Yogeshvar Krishna, defines *yoga* as the fortified capacity of a seeker to keep his poise in face of wordly successes and failures, triumphs and set-backs, favourable and unfavourable events, achievements and losses. Such a temper of firm stability and equilibrium gained as a result of assiduous practice (*abhyas*) is featured in the *Bhagvatgeeta* as '*sama yoga*'

> *Yogastha kuru karmani sangam tyakhtva dhananjai!*
> *siddhi-assidhayo samo bhutva samtvam yoga uchyate !!*[3]

'*yogah karmasoo kovashalam*'[4] defines the entire gamut of human activities performed without a trace of attachment (moha) as *yoga*.

The renowned sage of modern times, Sri Aurbindo, explains *yoga* as 'not only the realisation of God, but an entire consecration and change of the inner and outer life till it is fit to manifest divine consciousness and become a part of divine work'[5].

Yoga is a comprehensive name for all shades of spiritual practices that were/are acted out by seekers at various hermitages presided over by rishis (seers). This is how different treatises on *yoga* have given varied classifications of *yoga*. The seminal work on *yoga*, called *yoga-karika*, makes a mention of '*eight limbs of yoga*' (*ashtang yoga*). *Yoga-sutra* of Rishi Dattatreya and *yog-raj* upanishad, specifically ennumerate *mantra-yoga*, *laya yoga*, *hatha yoga and raj yoga* as four limbs of *yoga*[6]. The *Bhagvatgita* mentions *dhyan yoga*, *karma yoga, sankhya yoga*[7] and *sanyas yoga*[8] thereby adding new spiritual practices to the corpus of *yoga*.

Patanjali's sutra underlining 'eight limbs of yoga' states- '*yam-niyam-asan-pranayam-pratyahar-dharna-dhyan-samadhayo ashtav angani*'[9]. *Yam* means to remove one's mind and other senses from disturbing thoughts. *Niyam* is to bind oneself to the rules of *shauch* (purity), *santosh* (contentment), *tap* (meditation), *sva-adhyai* (self-study), *Ishvar-prenidhan* (devotion of God). *Asan* means a comfortable seat that a seeker should have while settling himself to *dhyan/dharna/samadhi*. *Prānāyām* is to control one's breathing process. *Pretyāhār* is to withdraw one's senses from the outer world. *Dharnā* is to fix one's mind on an icon or a part of one's body to increment concentration. *Dhyān* is self-absorbtion and *Samādhi* is meditation for God-ealisation.

The practices and spiritual goals as conceived and systematised by Patanjali rishi have served as salient guide-lines to all seekers hrough generations. The yogic body (astral body) from *mulādhār* to *sahasrār* has had wide acceptance across the board of spiritualis or God-seekers. The ascent from *mulādhār* to *sahasrār* define the spiritual trajectory for a seeker subscribing to any hue o spiritual philosophy. Consensus has been broad. Changes if an have been neglegible and minimal.

Yet, *yoga* as a subject of theory and practice has undergon gradual evolution without getting mired in the pools and puddl of stagnation. Its idea and idiom have been evolving and expandin in scope and application. Many sages, thinkers and practitione have re-oriented the theme of *yoga* and re-defined its goa and ideals for widening its range and scope. The Tantri subscribing to a novel pole of theory and practice ha considerably enriched the archive of yoga by raising *mant* *yoga*, *laya yoga & kundalini yoga* to a surmounting pedest They opened up new vistas in the realms of *yoga* for spiritu discernment and self-realisation.

The historical material that we gather from the pages of Kashm history affirm that Kashmiri Pandits as Buddhist monks fertilis the spiritual swathes of Tibet, Japan and China through t theme and idiom of *yoga*. They played an admirable role weaving the spiritual fabric of Central Asian countries, agai through the praxes of yoga[10]. Smarting under pain and angui of non-acceptance and persecution at their native abodes t semitised sufis of various hues who entered Kashmir and ot parts of India as sappers and miners of Islam highlighted th so-called sufi temper through the same corpus of yogic practic which the Kashmiri Pandit monks had effortfully introduced in these countries through inter-active sessions and debates. Even in modern times *yoga* continues to be a paramount hall-mark of the spiritual heritage of India. It has caught attention of large numbers of men and women beyond the margins of India. Our sages and gurus are more than generous in providing spiritual succour and fare to those who are spiritually hungry.

YOGA IN KASHMIR SHAIVISM

As per Kashmir Shaivism, Shiva assumes the form of a man, an individual self, through His intrinisc attribute of absolute freedom (svatantrya). For this, He harnesses His own in-built potency which is Maya. In Shankar Vedant Maya as a category of thought is an independent pole which overtly rivals the sovereignty of Brahman. But, contrary to this, in Kashmir Shaivism, Maya is Shiva's own potency through which He sportively veils Himself to create difference (*maya vibhedkarini*). *Shiva is jiva and jiva is Shiva is a cliched statement in Kashmir Shaivism*. Through the sportive act of veiling Himself Shiva assumes a limitation without losing His absolute lordship and transcendence. A Jiva, an individual self, has cramping limitations which reduce his universal authorship (*sarva-kartritava*), omni-science (*sarva-jnatritava*), all-satisfaction of universal consciousness (purnatava), eternity (*nityatava*) & freedom and Universality (niyati). In Shaiva lexicon a limited individual is pasu because he is encased and shackled by five sheaths called *kanchukas*.

A Jiva, individual self, has a gross body consisting of *panch-bhutas*, earth, fire, water, air and sky. For the maintenance of his whole body prān-Shakti permeates it. A Jiva has also a psychic frame called *antakaran* that consists of man, buddhi and ahankar. The existing and living Jiva as a conditioned and limited being is required to realise or cognise his original condition of Shiva and that forms the *value*. To actualise the value a Jiva, individual self, has to tread upon and work out a spiritual trajectory under the spiritual guidance of a sat-guru. The Shaiva Yoga as a corpus of esoteric practices defines the trajectory for self-realisation which in Shaiva terminology is self-recognition (pratyabhijjna).

In the realms of Kashmir Shaivism the catalogue of esoteric practices has been named as yoga, but has deliberately been qualified as '*Shaiva-Yoga*'. The practices which form the warp and woof of Shaiva-Yoga are mostly drawn from the non-dual Tantras like Malini-Vijay, Netra, Vijnān Bhairav and Shiva-Sutra. The Patanjali Yoga that broadly rotates round externally-oriented practices lacks in the critical potential to lead an inquisitive seeker far on the highway of self-cognition (pratyabhijjna). The very definition of *yoga* as suppression of natural human instincts and other in-born urges is not acceptable to the theory and practice of Shaivism. As Kashmir Shaivism is affirmative in its essential world-view it could not, in any way, legitimise the practices that apparently violated the very spirit and soul of it. A Jiva, individual self, is accepted as he intrisically is. Nothing is thought of which has to be forcibly thrust upon an aspirant. Kashmir Shaivism, by and large, is a *pravarti marga* which is for sublimation and gratification of all that which defines an essential man. *Bhukhti* and *Mukhti* hyphenate the worldly and spiritual destination charted out by Kashmir Shaivism. The existing world and spirituality of sorts, as two coordinates, have been reconciled and co-related.

Utpaldev, a scintillating genius of Kashmir Shaivism, defines *Shaiva-Yoga* as a new and easy-to-practise path[11]. His definition is based on the assertion that *Shaiva-Yoga* can serve common-place house-holders more than a life-negating monk. It is also an easy path because *yam, niyam and pretyahar* are presumed optional in the process of achieving spiritual destination. *Shaiva Yoga* is even hesitant to accept the status and fruitfulness of *Samadhi-Yoga* as its well-defined parameters evaluate it as 'a superior-type of dream-less state of sleep'[12] (*sushupti*).

Contrary to Patanjali Yoga, Shaiva-Yoga directly shoots at the distant stars. It prompts a seeker to commence his spiritual journey with the highest practice which in Shaiva-Yoga is *anupaya*, a path-less path. It is called *anupaya* because it does not delineate a trajectory to recognise one's innate nature of Shiva. In case a seeker does not succeed by directly taking to *anupaya*, he can take a re-course to a low-grade practice for gradual ascent by stages.

In Shaiva-Yoga the guidance of a sat-guru, a perfect soul, is a must. The Shaiva-texts describe a sat-guru as one who initiates, teaches and showers grace (Shaktipat). To the disciple a sat-guru is Shiva Himself. Guru, to Khemraj, is the means to realisation (Shiva-Sutra). A disciple has to be insightful and keenly receptive to what his sat-guru teaches him. Sat-guru and disciple are in a relation of identity.

Reason in Shaiva-Yoga is not at all considered as extraneous. Right reason is a real aid in learning and grasping the subtleties of Shaiva-thought. It plays a positive role in cleansing the head and heart of a seeker. Sharp intellect tempers an aspirant for the quest. The world-view that Kashmir Shaivism projects as its essence needs a reason-based comprehension and appreciation.Hence, reason, to Kashmir Shaivism, is a valued asset for a seeker undertaking a spiritual journey.

Scriptures pertaining to the domain of Shaivism and other forms of thought-structures are a receptacle of all the distilled knowledge that has originated right from Shiva Himself. As per spand-pradeep 'God reveals Himself through them (scriptures). They are one of the forms in which He (Shiva) is directly apparent in this world'. The scriptures teach, reveal, delineate and describe what is worth to be sought after. The scriptural knowledge as wisdom has to be translated into experiential knowledge through the Shaiva-praxes.

What is highly significant about Kashmir Shaivism is that it is so inclusive that it does not reject any method and form of spiritual discipline of indigenous origins that helps in the expansion and heighening of consciousness (unmesh) of a seeker. Any method that suits the abilities and psychic-frame of a seeker can be practised to cognise his original status of Shiva. Methods or means are many in number. Their worthiness and usefulness as a tool are determined by the spiritual goals that a seeker pursues. Shaiva-Yoga recognises as many as twenty-four means (upayas). *Vijnan-Bhairav* is a known compendium of 112 dharnas which can be put into practice for realising the spiritual goal of pratyabhijjna.

The Shaiva-Yoga has offered '*samavesh*' as a new concept that rivals, equals or surpasses '*samadhi*' as a supreme practice stipulated in the Patanjali-Yoga. In his voluminous work *Tantralok* Abhinavgupta explains that '*samavesh*' is mergence of a seeker's consciousness into the consciousness of Shiva wherein he feels that he is omni-present, all-powerful and all-knowing.

Aaveshashcha-svatantrayase sva tad rupa nimajnat !
par tad rupta shamboradhyat shakhtyavibhaginah !!

T.A.-1/173-74

Again in his commentary on utpaldev's Ishvar-pratyabhijjna Abhinavagupta describes '*samavesh*' as the state of *turiya* or still a higher state of *turiyatit*[13].

In Shaiva-Yoga *Shambavopaya* is the highest practice. In it all mental activities cease and mind glitters without a stir of thought. The seeker with his mind calmed and stilled turns inwards. Inward light shines and flashes. With regular practice such a state is to be prolonged. It results in going beyond the time-space limitations. The seeker with highly intuitive qualities gets a feel of his Shiva-like powers and ultimately cognises himself as Shiva.

'Svatantry-shakhtimevadhikam pashyan nirvikalpameva
Bhairva samavesham anubhavati[14]

Shakhtopaya is the second practice that Shaiva-Yoga prescribes for seekers who do not have the ability to take to sambhavopaya. It is based on a regular practice to imagine oneself as Shiva. It dispels all other thought currents that disturb the mind. The act of imagining oneself as God is called *bhavana*. The regular practice awakens the pure consciousness of a seeker who starts feeling that he has shiva-like powers and potencies. Shakhtopaya is based on the element of Jnan (knowledge). It can be called a technique of auto-suggestion or self-hypnotism.

Anavopaya is the last of the practices. It is better known as kriya-yoga because it is based on meditation and other relevant practices. A seeker focuses on an object, an icon, a picture or a part of his body with the impression that it is Shiva or is permeated by Shiva. It helps in purification of thought known as '*vikalp samskar*' . All forms of external rituals are included in anava-yoga. Anava-yoga helps in going over to the next stage of Shakta-Yoga.

YOGA IN LALLA DED VAAKHS

The general perception that a lay reader of Lalla Ded Vaakhs forms is that she was a yogini of the highest order. Being shaivite to the core she had deeply penetrated the spiritual imagination of Kashmiris as a *shaiva-yogini*. In his voluminous work 'The Word of Lalla' Sir Richard Temple bafflingly characterises her as *Shaiva-Yogini* on the basis of contents of her vaakhs which he has admirably translated into an alien idiom of English.

What I gather from my diligent study of Lalla Ded Vaakhs is that she had first tried her luck with a guru other than Sidda Srikanth. His prescription and spiritual discourses somehow failed to lead her far on the spiritual highway. It was in a vein of sheer dismay that she poured out '*abakh chaan pyom yath razdanay*'. Sidda Srikanth whom she calls 'omniscient' subsequently phrased her spiritual evolution through debates and discourses coupled with all grades of shaiva-practices. Her initiation and consecration in the theory and practice of non-dual Shaivism marked her absolute break from hazy spiritual goals and the very manner she conducted herself in normal life and its affairs. 'gora sund vanun ravan tyol pyom'.

The bijja-mantra through which *Siddha Srikanth* initiated her was the vedic symbol ***oum*** and Shaiva symbol *aham*, apparently two divergent *bijja-mantras*, but in a synthesis connoting and denoting the same Reality of Shiva in transcendence and immanence. Lalla sings –

dama dama omkar man paranovum
panai paran ta panai bozan
suham padas aham golum
teli Lalla ba vachus prakashasthan

I recited the blissful word 'Omkar' with such a zeal that it would set forth energy levels which would vibrate the drum of my ears only, which in turn would send sweet sensations to the brain, to produce the effect of ecstasy, with the result the entire ego of 'I' completely vanished. Therefore, I saw the true form of consciousness with the cosmic radiations and lo ! I am a realised soul. It is as such I have landed in the abode of light or prakashsthan.

Translation by B.N. Sopori

Lalla Ded though an instinctive seeker faced a catastrophic crisis in life when her marriage got fractured. As a result, agitation, conflict, despair, anger, anguish and uncertain future must have been the dominant weaves of her mental and psychic frame. She being in critical doldrums could not have direct tryst with the Shaiva path of '*pathless path*', *anupaya*. She could not have begun her spiritual journey even with *shambhava-yoga* that features the predominance of divine consciousness as a result of stilling and silencing of 'chita'-mind, a pre-requisite for it. Her vaakhs affirm and establish that she engaged herself with *jap, tap, dhyan, laya and pretyahar* as the common-place yogic-practices to calm her mind which was deeply agitated and extremelly disturbed. In a good number of vaakhs she positively refers to '*abhyas*', regular practice of yoga for concentration and chita-samskar (purification of mind), thus enabling herself to go over to other levels of *Shakta-Yoga and Shambhava-Yoga*. The intensity of her yoga-practices that steeled her for spiritual elevation is revealed by the vaakh:-

mala vondi zolum
jigar (kam) morum
teli lalla nav dram
yeli dala travimas tati

I burnt the foulness of my soul,
I slew my heart, its passions all,
I spread my garment's hem, and sat
Just there, on bended knees,
in utter surrender unto Him,
My fame as Lalla spread afar.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Three dirts, *mayiya, karma and anava*, are to be consumed and totally removed in the blazing fires of yoga. *Anava mal* as such cannot be removed through any form of Yoga. It needs Shiva's unreasoned *shaktipat* (grace). That is why Lalla Ded says that she surrendered herself in totality to Shiva's grace.

Lalla Ded initially was not introduced to the yogic practices. It was her Shiva-guru who patiently introduced such practices to her and over a period of time she came to realise their vital role and efficacy in attaining identity with Shiva. Through practic (abhyas) of controlling her fickle mind and managnig the nerve plexi Ida, pingla and sushmana and tearing and pulverising th bunch of klesas disturbing the mind she learnt how to jell th alchemy of yoga for spiritual destination of unity with Shiva Lalla Ded conveys:

Zaniha nadi dal man ratith
chatith vatith kutith kaleesh
zanha ada asta rasayan gatith
shiva chuya kruth tai chen vopadeesh

If I knew how to control my nadis, How to sever them from
the pull of desire,
How to bind them to the innerself,
How to cut the bonds of sorrow,
I should have known how to compound
the Elixir of life.
Shiva indeed is hard to reach.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Kou

Lalla Ded must have undergone *sham* and *dam* as very essentia practices for making over from *anava yoga* to other highe levels of yoga. Having steeled herself through vigorous practices she pacified her chita (mind), cleansed it of impurities o distraction, gloom and despair and made over to higher levels of *Shakta-Yoga and Shambhava-Yoga* that would ensure he self-cognition. She conveys that Shiva (sahaj) does not need *sham and dam* for identity with Him. He needs to be accessed and attained through *Iccaha* which means *Iccaha-Yoga* which is *shambhava yoga*, sure path to spiritual fulfilment. Lalla says:

sahzas sham dam na gache
yachi pravakh mukti dhar
salilas lavan zan meelith gache
toti chuai dwarlabh sahaz vyachar

Not by ascetic practices is the self realised;
Nor by desire can you gain
the portals of release.
In contemplation you may be absorbed
as salt in water.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

The navel-region (nabisthan), technically called kand-pura, is the sun-region where heat glows incessantly. The vital air (prāna) rising from navel along *pingla nadi* is warm when exhaled from nose. The air gets warmed up by the heat glowing at the navel region. Lalla Ded asserts that *brahmand* is the *moon-region* at the extreme end of *sushmana nadi* and is naturally cold. A cold current coming down the *sushmana nadi* cools the breath carried by *Ida* during the process of breathing in[15]. Lalla Ded explains the whole process of *prānāyām* in the *Vakh* as under –

nabisthans chai prakrath zalvani
hindis tam yati pran vatagat
brahmandas pyath chai nad vohvani
ha-ha tava turun ha-ha tava tot

At the navel region is the place of the sun,
Where Prakriti glows as hot as fire;
From here hot breath rises to the throat,
At the crown of the head is the place of the Moon,
From here cool nectar down the nadis flows,
Thus hah is hot, and huh is cold.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Ko

Lalla Ded is unequivocal in proclaiming that she was born in the world for purposes of meditation (*tapasya*), a known yogic practice of wide acceptance. It was through intense meditation that she attained the divine light of consciouenss (*bodh prakash*), a state of turiya which is the state of Shiva (*Shivahood*). She is liberated as liberation while living (*jeevan-mukhut*) is a perennial state of Shiva-consciousness which is beyond the condition of gyrations of life and death. Lalla says–

samsaras aayas tapsya
bodha prakash lobum sahaz
maryam na kanh marna kansi
mara nech lasa nech

A tapasvin into the world came I,
And Bodha illumined my path to the self,
Alike for me is life and death;
Happy to live & happy to die,
I mourn for none, none mourns for me.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Lalla Ded in essence is a Shaiva-Yogini par-excellence. Her varied spiritual experiences are vividly revealed through her prismatic vaakhs couched in coherently brilliant language of indigenous origins.

Chapter — 6

PRATYABHIJJNA-FROM SCRIPTURES TO KASHMIR SHAIVISM TO LALLA DED VAAKH

The Doctrine of Pratyabhijjna is a highly significant developmen in the theory and practice of Kashmir Shaivism. It is neither a school of Kashmir Shaivism nor is it a sub-trend within its matrix. The philosophisation of the vision of Agamās became apparent in the seminal work of Shiva-Sutra authored by Vasugupta, a sage and thinker. The Doctrine of *Pratyabhijna* graduates the philosophical vision of Acarya Vasugupta to the stature of philosophy proper. How Pratyabhijjna expounded and interpreted the theory and practice of Kashmir Shaivism came to be the essential philosophy of it. It posed philosophical issues, formulated and conceptualised them, forged a system based on required building blocks and used logic to gell and cement the system. It is apt to say that if Kashmir Shaivism is a system of thought, it is because of the rational approach of *Pratyabhijjna* to the issues of theory and practice as expounded by Kashmir Shaivism.

Pratyabhijjna epitomises the full thesis of Kashmir Shaivism, its architectonics and architecture and logical exploration of that area of knowledge that subordinates empirical and theoretical learning to the cognition of identity with consciousness supreme or Shiva. Being the Central philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism, it is imprinted with the semantics and texture of a seeker attaining *pratyabhijna* (recognition) of his real identity. Oft-quoted upanishadic 'Maha-Vakyas (sublime sentences) carry a ring of 'Pratyabhijjna' hall-marking the identity of man with Brahman, the ultimate reality. 'I am Brahman' (aham brahmosmi), "Thou art that' (tat tvam asi) & "This self is Brahman' (ayam atma brahma) explicitly reveal the identity of self with Brahman. The upanishads are replete with such maha-vakyas (sublime sentences) which Shaivite scholars of Kashmir and Varanasi acknowledge as '*pratyabhijjna maha-vakayas*'.

The word '*pratyabhijjna*' with its morphological variations travelled to Kalidas, 5th century poet and dramatist, who crafted an epoch-making drama titled as 'Abhijnān Shakuntalam'. The word 'abhijnān' fascinated a scholar like Dr. Laxmidhar who went whole hog to interpret it as *'pratyabhijjna'*. In his doctoral thesis, the Birthplace of Kalidas, the learned writer opines that 'Abhijnān Shākuntalam' is 'the allegorical representation of the philosophy of pratyabhijjna'. In elaboration of his thesis he states that Dushyant, the hero of the drama, represents Shiva and Shakuntlā, the heroine of the drama, represents Shakti. The ring, which is a motif of love, used as a dramatic device is the cause that reminds Dushyant of his marriage to Shakuntalā. The same is interpreted by Dr. Laxmidhar as Kalidasa's profound knowledge of the Pratyabijjna Doctrine central to the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism.

The conclusive thesis of Dr. Laxmidhar that the Doctrine of Pratyabhijjna had gained wide currency in the times of Kalidas, 5th century A.D., is not historically credible. The galaxy of scholars from Kashmir led by Swami Laxman Je Maharaja, Dr. Balji Nath Pandit and Prof. Nila Kanth Gurtu are on terra firma of history when they place Acarya Vasugupta in the second half of 8th Century A.D. It was his pupil, Siddha Somanand, 9th century A.D. who was the first philosopher of Kashmir Shaivism to conceptualise the seminal idea of 'pratyabhijjna' in his theoretical work titled *'Sivadrshti'*. Siddha Somanand, a seer of tremendous erudition, had received the idea of 'pratyabhijjna' as a legacy from the vibrant Vedantic and Epic sources. It was a feat of his genius that he invested the word *'pratyabhijjna'* with a lofty philosophical meaning that gradually morphed as the sublime theme of Kashmir Shaivism at the hands of philosophical seers like Acarya Utpaldev, Acarya Abhinavgupta and a host of their successors in due line of the same tradition.

Besides vedantic and epic sources, Sidda Somanand, was also aware of the Pali version of the lexical word *'Pratyabhijjna'* as 'Paccabinna' littered over the Buddhist philosophies that dominated the intellectual landscape of Kashmir for a better part of its history. In the Buddhist lexicon the word 'paccabinna' denotes conceptual knowledge that is recognised through the tool of a sign, symbol or motif. Possessed of an acumen and discernment of a great theoretician Sidda Somanand treated the Buddhist philosophies incisively and critically with a view to laying the foundation of Kashmir Shaivism indubitably non-dual. Logic is Sidda Somanand's excellence. It is manifest from the conceptualisations and formulations that he has ably framed in his philosophical manual 'Sivadrishti'. In the annals of Kashmir Shaivism Sidda Somanand has earned tremendous appreciation and recognition as a logician and rationalist par excellence. His approach and premise have always been preferred to the mystical treatment that Ksemaraj, a worthy pupil of Bhagwan Abhinavgupta, has given to the philosophical issues of Kashmir Shaivism. That is why the vibrant Shaiva tradition of Kashmir has not lent much of credence to his work titled *'Pratyabhijjna Hridayam'* as a work on Pratyabhijjna and its essential theme[1].

In his ardent quest of source-materials that led to the evolutionary development of the theme of Pratyabhijjna Dr Laxmidhar aptly quotes verses from the Nilamatapurana that amply establish the Pratyabhijjna theme, if not in a philosophical sense, but in a sense that appears akin to the theme of Prayabhijjna. In his doctoral thesis 'The Doctrine of Recognition' Dr. RK Kaw has quoted verses in full from the text of Nilamata-purana and has aptly evaluated them as 'seed ideas' that served the philosophical fare of Sidda Somanand who transformed them into a full-fledged concept that shaped the whole course of futuristic development in the domain of Kashmir Shaivism.

The high-ranking philosopher of the Doctrine of Pratyabhijjana is Acarya utpaldeva, the celebrated pupil of Sidda Somanand, who deftly built a coherent architecture on the substratum of the doctrine originally conceptualised by his preceptor (satguru). *Ishvar Pratyabhijjna-Karika* is his principal work on the theme of Pratyabhijjna. Written in an aphoristic style he commented on his own 'Karikas' with a view to explaining and clarifying his concepts and 'seed ideas'. This work known as 'Vritti', a commentary, is lost in the holocaust wrought by foreign Sufi-Sayyids on the natives of Kashmir. 'Siddhitrayi', a trilogy of treatises on philosophical issues like 'relation,', 'time and space' and 'Sankhya as a thought model' is a philosophical work highlighting the 'Pratyabhijjna' perspective.

Acarya Utpaldeva is a philosopher, logician and incisive critic of contemporary philosophical systems. He raises issues philosophical, debates them thread-bare and architects a theoretical structure where-in all catergories of thought are cogently synergised. As a seer of exemplary erudition he had comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the Buddhist schools of philosophy, vedantic model of thought, Sankhya and other materialist philosophies. Kashmir Shaivism is a system of thought because of the brilliance of Acarya Utpaldeva as a philosopher having skills in methodologies of debating issues on logical and analytical lines.

In his doctoral thesis 'The Doctrine of Pratyabhijjna' Dr. RK Kaw is all plaudits for Acarya Utpaldeva for his remarkable originality of 'systematising the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism' which in essentials is the Pratyabhijjna Doctrine.

In his brilliant introduction to the masterly work of Bhagwan Abhinavagupta, Ishavar Pratyabhijjna Vimarsini, Pt. Madhusudan Koul, the then Director of Research Department, J&K Government, writes, 'the object of Utpaldeva was, first, to canonise the new system of Shaiva monism and to establish it on philosophical lines, second, to check the Buddhist in-roads levelled against it and lastly, to popularise the system as superior to the other prevailing systems of philosophy'.

The Pratyabhijjna Doctrine would not have acquired heightened philosophical finesse and sophistication had Bhagwan Abhinavagupta, the doyen of Kashmir Shaiva thought, not expounded it with his scintillating philosophical insight and sagacity. His two commentaries on the Pratyabhijjna philosophy are outstanding contributions to the domain of philosophy in general and to the domain of Pratyabhijjna philosophy in particular. In his 'Laghu Vimarsini' he dwelt on the semantics of Pratyabhijjna and spelt it out to make it understandable to averages. But, in his 'Brahati Vimarsini' he explained and clarified the vital concepts and formulations which Acarya Utpaldeva had neatly delineated on his own 'Karikas', styled in aphorisms, about the Doctrine of Pratyabhijjna.

A long line of Acaryas in the un-interrupted tradition of Kashmir Shaivism enriched and reinforced the conceptual frame of Pratyabhijjna philosophy through their scholarly works, and elaborate commentaries on the theory and praxis of the Prayabhijjna philosophy. New concepts were framed, old ones were subjected to revaluation and re-appraisal and new dimensions were added to the main philosophy of Pratyabhijjna. The theoretical frame was made more comprehensive and cohesive and empirical segment of the Pratyabhijjna philosophy was given a new orientation and thrust. The Acaryas who in deed and word were men of form divine included well-known seers like Ksemaraj, Yogaraj, Jayarath, Sivopadyaya and Bhaskaracarya. The list would remain incomplete if the name of Swami Laxman Je Maharaj is not mentioned. His immense contribution to Pratyabhijjna philosophy and its wide propagation deserves separate study and appreciation.

ACARYA SOMANAND ON PRATYABHIJJNA

In Sivadrsti Acarya Somanand refers to the concept of Pratyabhijjna as 'a simultaneous act of perceiving some aspects of a thing and remembering all aspects of it in totality as perceived or cognised in the past'[2]. He morphs the same statement to the level of philosophy for recognition of Supreme Reality of Shiva, the immanence of whom is within the grasp of every ordinary individual. But, the other attributes of Shiva like His omniscience and omnipotence are not within the range of his experience because of the limitations that wrap his being. But, he has heard about these attributes of Shiva from many others within the orbit of his contact who are well-versed in the corpus of scriptures. So, his memory retains impressions of Shiva's inherent attributes other than His pervasion in all objects around the world. The moment an individual perceives one attribute of Shiva through his random observations in the world he comes to remember other attributes of Shiva that are already implanted on his memory plate. In Pratyabhijjna two simultaneous acts of direct perception and remembrance are integrated and unified. Says Acarya Somanand-

tasmat jneyam samagra ekya vastu shaivam vyavasthitam
tatha sumran yogat cha samaryate kim tathavidham
yadrk drashtam drashtata syat athwa jnanam evatat
drshta sumranyoeke sthite tad-uppadyate
tatha sa prabyabhjjnat sa eva ayam iti sithiti[3]

ACARYA UTPLDEVA ON PRATYABHIJJNA

In the second and third karikas of *Ishvar Pratyabhijjna Karika Acarya utpaldeva* controverts the polemics of his critic who is critical of Pratyabhijjna thought by informing him that *Maheshvar* (Lord) has the absolute sovereign powers of cogntiion and action and is in no need of proofs (pramanas) to establish His being as such. But, a Jiva, who is Shiva only, has forgotten his intrinsic powers of freedom to cognise and act because of delusion (moha-vashat). Pratyabhijjna is to realise his inherent powers of cognition and action which otherwise he has forgotten and thus are dormant or unrealised. writes Acarya Utpaldeva-

Kartari Jnatari sva-atmanya adi sidhe mahesvare
ajadatma nishedham va siddhim va viddhet kah
kintu moha-vashat drshte anupplakshyate
shakhtya avishkarnen iyam pratyabhijjna updarshyate

BHAGWAN ABHINAVAGUPTA ON PRATYABHIJJNA

Bhagwan Abhinavgupta delineates *Pratyabhijjna* as '*Maheshwar* (sovereign Lord) becoming manifest now as it was always so before.'

Writes the Acarya, '*tasya mahehvarasya pratyabhijjna pratipam atma abhimukhena jnanam prakashah pratyabhijjna*'[5]. After dwelling on two vital words of 'pratipam' and 'abhimukhena', Dr R.K. Kaw concludes that Pratyabhijjna is an act of cognition 'facing oneself of what was forgotten'[6].

Bhagwan Abhinavagupta makes it amply clear that the recognition of Mahehshvar (sovereign Lord) is not in reality recognition of some-thing that is not already known. In fact, recognition of Maheshvar is within the range of experience but is forgotten (*Jnantasya api visumritasya eva chaditasya eva purnah*). A seeker in quest of '*atma pratyabhijjna*' (self-recognition) is already aware of his innate reality but has forgotten it because of his own deluding powers. He takes that as his real 'Self which actually is his 'not-self'. When he removes this veil of delusion, he cognises his original reality as Shiva. He is Shiva because he in his origins is Shiva. His experience of being a Shiva was already known to him. So, Bhagwan calls it, 'nunam sah eva Ishvaroaham'[7]

TWO ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

Two examples are stated to explain the concept of '*Pratyabhijjna*'.

There is a lady who has been betrothed to a man. She has not met or seen him. She has started loving him and is, therefore, love-laden. Her fiance, somehow, stands before her and is one among many others. She is unable to locate him, much less recognise him. Finally a man reveals the identity of the one she is betrothed to. She realises that he is her fiance who will be her husband in future. The revelation gives her lots of pleasure. This is what *pratyabhijjna* is.

In another example a king has heard of a pandit and his achievements in the Shastras and other segments of knowledge. But, the king has not seen him and therefore does not know him. Another pandit in the king's court fetches him to the court and reveals his identity to the king. Thus, the king recognises his identity as the same Pandit about whom he had heard from many sources. It is also a case of pratyabhijjna.

PRATYABHIJJNA AND INTELLECTUAL KNOWLDGE

Kashmir Shaivism does not discount but appreciably recognises the part that intellectual knowledge plays in the process of Pratyabhijjna. All the philosophers who moulded and structured the philosophical discourse of Shaiva thought have written prolific tomes on issues immensely relevant to it. As an article of faith they hold that all forms of knowledge emanate from Shiva as the fountain-head. It is testified by the fact of Shiva lucidly answering all the metaphysical questions posed to Him by His ever-inquisitive consort, Parvati.

Intellectual knowledge gained from diligent studies in scriptures, varied forms of thought and other segments of learning shapes the temper of an aspirant, broadens his perspectives on life and world, deepens his understanding of metaphysical, ontological and epistemological problems, cultivates his aesthetics, dispels his doubts and deepens his knowledge relating his field of study and more than most, purifies his mind for a spiritual awakening. Mundane knowledge though classed as 'apara' knowledge is not rejected as negative but is accepted as a step in the attainment of self-recognition. Though widely accepted as positive yet intellectual knowledge is not in any way what we call self-recognition (pratyabhijjna).

'Pratyabhijjna' can be had when an aspirant removes his crippling limitations that are caused by three 'dirts' (malas) lexically known as anava-mal, mayiya-mal and karma-mal. These limitations shrink and inhibit his inherent powers (shaktis) of cognition and action. He sees things but does not see them in depth. He has perceptions and knowledge, but are limited in range and scope. His limitations get reflected when he perceives the world apart from him. In his basics he is Shiva with all the attributes of freedom, omniscience and omnipotence. But it is the 'self-veiling' act that has reduced him to a 'Jiva' or 'Anu' in Shaiva parlance. Under the initiation and guidance of a preceptor (sat-guru) or through impartation of a 'mantra' or by grace (shaktipat), he comes to recognise himself as Shiva with all his intrinsic strengths and powers. It is no sea change or transformation (parinamvad). It is a simple change of condition that makes a 'jiva' or 'anu' to intuit his 'Shiva condition'. He is free from all limitations. He is in close harmony with the outside world. In fact, he intuits all that is outside him as his own pulse of emanation. He experiences Shivahood right in the world as a living and existing individual. He is '*Jeevan mukhta*'. As a 'self-recognised' soul he lives an unfettered normal life in hustle and bustle of the world. With an awakened sense of social responsibility he urges and guides others to take to the spiritual path for attainment of 'self-recognition'. His condition is that of 'loftiness', 'sublimity' and 'elevation' having a deep sense of commitment to fellow-beings.

THE THEME OF PRATYABHIJJNA

The non-dual Shaivites of Kashmir hold that 'Pratyabhijjna' always denotes and connotes 'atma-pratyabhijjna' (self-recognition). 'Self', therefore, is the generic theme of 'pratyabhijjna'. 'self' is not the ordinary or mundane self of a Jiva. It is identical with the Highest Lord (Maheshvar). In the *Bhaskari* it is clearly put that 'self' remains established in a Jiva on the basis of self-experience, reason and scripture[8] (*evam sva samvedana uppatya agam siddham maheshvar rupam atma svarupam*). Maheshvar as the Highest Reality is well-within the experiential range of a Jiva. As he is wrapped up under the layers of delusion or darkness or limited knowledge (mita-jnan), the self comprehends itself as the duality and multiplicity of the world. In Parmarth-Sar Bhagwan Abhinavaupta writes–

ajnan timir yogat ekam api svam svabhava atmanam,
grahya-grahàk nana veichitrena avabudhyat!

'Self' is eternal and self-luminous (sva prakash). It is self-proved (svayam siddha). As all forms of knowledge shine in its light, no reason based knowledge can establish its luminosity (prakash) 'Self' is consciousness, which is inherently free to create the world of objects out of its own essence. 'Self' as such is transcendental and immanent too. As per the Shaiva though 'Self' through its own absolute freedom (svatantrya), assumes a limitation that causes loss of freedom to cognise and act. A Jiva living in the objective world takes body, breath and ego a his real Self. 'Pratyabijjna' is to cognise his essential nature o Shivahood which he has forgotten under the impact of assume limitations.

'Pratyabhijjna' as per the world-view of Shaiva masters i knowledge (Jnạ̄n). But it is not the same knowledge that w take pains to acquire from multiple sources of discursi knowledge. It is the knowledge which in the words of D Kamlakar Mishra is 'an awakening, enlightenment or rising a higher level of awareness or consciousness'[4]. 'Pratyabhij is the real knowledge as it is knowledge of the 'Self', atm jnan, which is beyond the subject-object dichotomies of t world and is deeply rooted in an integrated vision that percei everything in the world of multiplicity as its own expansion emanation. The state of ordinary knowledge is that of limit knowledge or circumscribed vision or awareness. But the sta of 'Pratyabhijjna' is that of 'bodh', illumination or enlightenment. Though 'pratyabhijjna' is intuitional, yet it is a sustained intuition, a sustained enlightenment. A self-recognised soul, who is a Shiva, continues to bask in the light of consciousness (bodh-prakash). He loves all humans of all grades and stations in life because he sees them all as his own projection (abhasa). He is the real seer, rishi, acarya above all trivial and tribal affiliations and linkages. His perception of love is not that of 'obedience' but that of universal variety as is epitomised in the Vedic dictum, 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam'.

'Pratyabhijjna' is to recognise that the real nature (svabhava) of 'Self' is 'Prakash and Vimarsh, which is termed as Shiva'. 'Pratybhijjna' is to cognise oneself as Shiva as that is the stuff of one's being[5].

PRATYABHIJJNA IN LALLA DED VAAKH

Lalla Ded was a Shaiva-yogini with her gaze rivetted to the goal-post of 'atma pratyabhijjna' (self-recognition). Going through the mill of yogic practices under the tutelage of a prescient preceptor, she had stilled her 'chitta', purified it (chitta samskar) and harnessed all the potentials of her psycho-physical frame to awaken her initiative processes for recognition of her intrinsic nature of Shiva. Through initiation and intellectual knowlege (baudik jnān) she was able to identify the deluding energies that wean away a man from the path of real knowledge and keep him entangled in dualities of the world. Lalla Ded transcended all that symbolises 'not-self' and what remained was her real 'Self' which she recognised as her fundamental essence.

As an initiated Shaivite Lalla Ded was well-groomed in the fact that she was possessed of all the six attributes that feature the sovereignty of Shiva. Yet she was aware that she was unable to act out her inherent attributes because of the limitations that engulfed her total being.

Says Lalla –

yimai shey che timai sheya meya
shyam gala che byan tats
yohai byan abeed che ta mea
cha shyan sami ba sheyi mushyas

O Lord of Dark Blue Throat,
I have the same six Thou hast.
And yet, estranged from Thee,
I suffer misery,
There surely is this difference :
Thou art the master of the six,
By the six I have been robbed.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Kou

When she set herself onto the path of self-quest, she assiduousl fought against anger (krodh), greed (lobh) and ravenous eatin (ahar) as markers of 'not-self' that distract and disturb the mind (man) of a seeker. Though body is a vehicle for spiritual enlightenment, Lalla Ded discarded the penchant for identification of her real 'Self' with body, breath and subject-object apprehensions through intellectual clarity and courses in yoga. Pratyabhijjna dawned on her after the veil of delusion (moha) was cut asunder and removed.

The Shaiva position vis-a-vis Shiva is that He is absolutely free and has no constraints in matters of willing, knowing and acting. In existentialist parlance Shiva can be said to be 'condemned to freedom'. It is out of His absolute freedom that Shiva assumes a limitation and turns into a living individual, existing, breathing, making choices and decisions. Such an act, kriya in Shaivite parlance, in no way impairs His absolute sovereingty or transcendence. In fact, His sovereignty lies in creation. Māyā Skakti is His own energy which He harnesses at will for the act of creating the world of objects.

Lalla Ded is in full know of the transcendence of Shiva in which state there are no 'I' and 'thou' relationships, subject-object dichotomies and no ideas to contemplate on. Shiva's transcendence is total equilibrium and quiescence. Yet, Lalla calls Shiva as 'sarvakreyi', all-doer and that establishes Shiva's over-lordship (mahesvariya). As a matter of His absolute sovereignty Shiva forgets Himself to get shrivelled into a limited individual

Conveys Lalla –

tsu na bo na dheya na dyan
gava pania sarva-kreyi mashith........

There is no thou no I,
no object of contemplation, not
even contemplation,
It is only the All-creator, who Himself became
lost in forgetfulness.

Translation by Dr. Grierson

Lalla Ded had known it as a theoretical tenet, but she realised it through Shaiva-Yoga practices only to become wise by recognising her own reality as Shiva. Those who do not know their own essence as Shiva are blind and remain entangled in the meshes of ignorance or limited knowledge.

Says Lalla –

anto dyuthukh kenh na anvya
gayi sath layi par pashith..........

The blind folk saw not any meaning in this
But when they saw the Supreme, the seven worlds
became lost in nothingness.

Translation by Dr. Grierson

The limitations that Shiva assumes through His own sovereignty are lexically known as malas (dirts) in Kashmir Shaivism. Three forms of malas wrap up an individual in layers of limitation inhibiting the inherent potentialities of an individual as Shiva. Anavamala, mayiyamal and karmamal impair his divine faculties of 'fullness', omniscience' and 'one-ness'.

As a caged being an individual lives in the empirical world of name and form. The very empirical life through Shiva's grace or his own initiative impels him to soar above the dualities of the world. The limitations (malas) that are inhibiting, crippling and impairing are in any case to be curbed, burnt (as Lalla says) and finally cast away even to the last vestiges. In fact, removal of dirts is the gate-way of Pratyabhijjna.

As an inquisitive seeker Lalla Ded was naturally conscious of her caged existence in the empirical world. Taking that as a reality she took to Shaiva-Yoga trajectory to transcend her limitations. She burnt the dirts coiling her heart and slew her passions through meditating on her own intrinsic Shivahood and as a last act surrendered herself to Shiva's grace (Shaktipat) for removal of 'anava mal'. It earned her name as a 'tapasvini' or a 'yognini' and that remained her identity down the ages.

Says Lalla –

mala vondi zolum
kama morum
telli lalla nava drama

I burnt the foulness of my soul,
I slew my heart, its passions all,
I spread my garment's hem, and sat
Just there, on bended knees,
in utter surrender to Him.
My fame as Lalla spread afar.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Lall Ded cleansed her mind (man) of the dirts (malas) staining it. It shone dazzlingly like a mirror that is dust-free. Her clean mind as the firm plank made her soar into a state of self-recognition (pratyabhijjna). Recognition of Shiva within her microcosmic frame underscores her own condition of Shivahood.

Says she –

makris mala zan chalum manas
ada labum zanis zan

Foulness from my mind was cleared as ashes from a mirror.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Having realised the mission of self-recognition Lalla Ded is blithe and rapturous. She is all through new as a result of '*bodh jnan*' or enlightenment (*sva prakash*). Her body and mind in complete purity are completely soaked. Her chitta has come to the state of chiti (consciousness divine) and she perceives all objects in the world as her own emanation (*abhasa*) and all forms of nature her own projection.

Says Lalla Ded –

Chyath navai chandrama novuya
zalmai dyuthum navam novuya
yana pyatha mea tan man novuya
tana lalla bo navan navai chyas

The chitta, the mind, is ever new,
The ever-changing moon is new,
And ever new the shoreless expanse
of waters that I have seen.
Since, I, Lalla, have scoured my body and mind,
I live in the ever-present Now,
for ever new and new.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Lalla Ded's objective in pursuing spiritual path was only to get merged into Shiva, thereby losing her identity as a separate pole. It is also called moksa (liberation) from the pains and agonies of birth and death that ensue because of one's own karmas, actions, committed in previous lives. Lalla Ded, therefore, was a liberated soul, one who had recognised her essential essence as Shiva and become an inseparable part of Shiva or consciousness supreme.

Says Lalla –

Su yali dyuthum nishi panas
sorui sui ta ba no kenh..........

When I saw Him close by me,
He was all and I was not.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Chapter – 7

BHAKTI AND WORSHIP IN SCRIPTURES IN KASHMIR SHAIVISM AND LAL DED VAAKH

Bhakti as per the traditional mould can be defined as motiveless service to God. It has close linkages with actions (*karman*) that human beings routinely perform during the span of their life. It is axiomatic that the world depends on actions[1] (*loko ayam karma bandanah*). Actionless-ness is a marker of death and decay. In the dynamics of life action is what integrates a man in a bond of cohesion with other members of a social group. Renunciation has come to occupy a dominant position in the trajectory of Indian spirituality. But renunciation never stipulates giving up of action. But what is to be renounced is desire, attachment or fruit accruing from an action that a person performs[2]. In the words of Prof. Hiriyanna, 'The Gita-teaching stands not for renunciation of action, but for renunciation in action'[3]. A motiveless action has a close nexus with knowledge too. A true *Jnani*, a knower, alone can surrender himself to God who has assured him of protection (*na me bhaktah pranashyati*). Bhakti, therefore, features total surrender to God.

The main locus of *bhakti* is *Maheshvar*, call Him Shiva, Ram or Krishna. The bhakta reposes full and unflinching faith in Him and totally depends on Him for grace (*shakhtipat*). Absolute dependence on and unflinching faith in God formulate the two critical ingredients of bhakti. A sinless bhakta in the embrace of a virtuous life has full faith in his Maheshvar that He will liberate him from the rotating wheel of life and death. A bhakta, even if mired in sinful life, can also depend on Him to ferry him across the ocean of *samsar*. A bhakta can serve his Maheshvar as a servant (*dasa*) serves his master. He can cultivate a relation of friendship with Him and worship and adore Him for spiritual gains. This type of relationship has generated an enchanting treasure of aesthetics in the domain of art and poetry. There can be a bhakta who defies all constraints and inhibitions and starts loving his Maheshvar. But, in such a relationship of love, he rises above the carnal form of love in mundane life. The loving relationship with Maheshvar elevates him to such a state of heightened consciousness where margins between him and his *Maheshwar* fade away and the two become indistinguishably as one.

The *rishis* and *munis* have written tracts on bhakti which delineate their experiences in their varied relationships with Maheshvar either as servants, friends or lovers. What one gets from these expositions is that Bhakti is all through experiential, not a subject for theorisation. The fact remains that bhakti as an emotional expression of a bhakta can be portrayed in concordance with the world-view that he harbours. The great poets like Tulsidas, Surdas, Vidyapati, Jaidev et al have delineated their forms of bhakti as moulded by their views on man, world and Maheshvar. Despite philosophisation of bhakti, a bhakta is and has to be completely involved in his service, friendship or courtship unto his Maheshvar. The suffering (*arta*), the searcher (*Jijnasu*) and the self-interested (*artharthi*) are on the peripheries of bhakti as they in their forms of bhakti are not totally involved in the relationship that they forge with their Maheshvar. It is only the wise (*Jnani*) who is the true bhakta because of his total involvement in his object of service or love, that is Maheshvar.

Gleaning through the pages of the Indian scriptures of yore it becomes evident that bhakti, its contents, forms and contours have evolved through ages in consonance with the evolution of philosophical-cum-religious consciousness in India. The '*Nasidiya Sukhta*' of the *Rig Veda* typifies the vedic *rishi's* mind that is intensely curious to probe and know the origins of universe. Riddled with doubt and indecision, the *rishi* oscillates between sat (being) and asat (non-being). The whole *sukhta* vividly reflects his amazement at 'the prospect of universe' (*vishva*). He is completely lost in the perennial problem of knowing the origins of cosmos, how and wherefore of it. The Vedic *rishi* is equally beset with a sense of fear in the face of awful forces of nature. That is why vedic gods symbolise powers of nature. Observes Max Mullar, 'These gods were the first philosophy, the first attempt at explaining the wonders of nature'.

The mammoth corpus of Vedic literature throws up the *Vedic Rishis* bearing a mind beset with 'wonder' and 'fear'. The two, singularly or in combination, had not the potential to generate an impulse of 'bhakti' and 'worship'. In the absence of a motivating impulse there could be no relationship, personal or impersonal, between the rishis and the plethora of gods. Yet, we glimpse

the first germinations of 'bhakti' and 'worship' in the hymns (*richa*) sung by the *vedic rishis*. Sacrifices were offered to gods through yajnas only to propitiate them for bestowal of prosperity in life, abundance of crops and protection of cattle-wealth. They were also propitiated as not to wreak havoc on them through earth-quakes, floods and other natural disasters. The Vedic hymns in general are purely formalistic and deficient in the basic sentiments that pave way for 'bhakti and 'worship'.

The *Upanishads* are an important milestone in the development of philosophical and religious consciousness in India. The first seeds that were sown in the Vedic hymns burgeoned forth in the *upanishadic* tracts as the crux of human excellence. Deflecting away from the formalities of sacrifices and 'complexus of ceremonies' upanishads pointer to a 'deepening inwardness' by focusing on '*Atman*', the Self, 'a region of new quest, vaster than the objective world'[4]. Philosophical ruminations and over-all religious consciousness morphed into a genre that marked a departure from what we had in the Vedas. The upanishadic formulations and conceptualisations proved trend-setting and determined the future course of Indian philosophy and *dharma*.

Swami Ranganath Nanda puts thus – 'The upanishads not only gave a permanent orientation to the Indian culture and thought, but also blazed a trail for all subsequent philosophy in East and West'[5].

Upanishads in their essence are knowledge-oriented and also the path that they have blazed is based on knowledge (*Jnān*). The knowledge-path (*Jnān marga*) poses insurmountable difficulties for a bhakta with an intent to tread upon it. It has been characterised as '*ksurasya dhara nishita duratya durgam pathah*'. The high-brow upanishadic formulations like '*aham brahmosmi', 'tat tvam asi' and 'soham*', though replete with path-breaking philosophical content, could not attract the popular sentiment because of the lack of elements in them that form the sheet-anchor for '*bhakti*' and '*worship*'.

With the passage of time the knowledge-oriented spiritual goals suffered a dilution and the space thus created was occupied by 'bhakti' and 'worship' that allowed a free play to aesthetics and human emotions. The emerging trend got crystallised in the *Narayan upanishad, Krishna upanishad and Ramtapni upanishad* that focussed on bhakti and worship of Narayan, Krishna and Ram as divine gods in human form. The three gods were presented as manifest forms of Brahman, as the ultimate Reality and got merged in the same ultimate principle. Though '*bhakti*' and '*worship*' were the main focus, the trend as such could not materialise as an independent path to God-realisation.

Buddhism debated philosophical and religious issues from ascetic and regressive points of view. '*Sarvam dukham* and *Sarvam mithya*' were sympbols of the Buddhist philosophy of pessimism and rejectionism. At the philosophical level the non-soul doctrine of the Buddhists coupled with momentariness of everything failed to find resonance in the Indian mind. Kashmir as the pivotal centre of Buddhist thought and dharma stemmed the negationist trend when the Kashmiri Pandit thinkers as masters of the Buddhist philosophy gave it a positive and affirmative orientation. Mahayana Buddhism in a new mould blazed the trail for '*bhakti*' and 'worship' of Buddha as a divine incarnation.

Shankaracharya as a colossus striding the domain of Indian philosophy and dharma gave a new orientation to the vedantic philosophy and dharma. He systematised it in a manner that Max-Mullar in awe appraises the Shankaran philosophy as 'the finest flower of Indian wisdom'. Shankar's philosophy is monistic in approach and logic. Brahman, to Shankar, is the absolute reality and phenomenal world is only illusory and false (*branti and mithyaa*). He has distrust for the role of action for it has 'a reference to the world which is dual and false'. He emphatically stresses the path of knowledge (*Jnān marga*) as it leads a seeker 'out of the dualist eddies of the world'. Like *kierkegaard*, the existentialist, Shankar has pointed out the limitations of reason and intellect in self-realisation as it is an 'intuitively lived and felt experience'.

It was a rude shock to the Shankarites when Shankaracharya authored a work like '*Saundariya-lahiri*' and *stotras like the Dakshinamurti Stotra*'. In the said-works he appeared to impair his own essential position as a non-dual philosopher and the knowledge path he had advocated as a means to self-realisation (*moksa*). The very change in the philosophical position of Shankaracharya confirms his visit to Kashmir as described in '*shankar Digvijay*'. His contact with the Kashmiri Pandit Shaivites left him convinced of the Shaivite philosophy of non-dualism. His switch over to the path of 'bhakti' and 'worship' opened new vistas for the seekers keen to realise their spiritual goals and aspirations.

Ramanujacharya, vaishnavite to the core, made 'a judicious mix of non-dual thesis of absolutism with personal theism' (belief in *Maheshvam*). He was not the innovator. In fact, such an attempt was already made in the *Bhagvatgita, Mahabharata* and the *Vishnu Puran* and *Bhagvatam*. It is apt to put that *Ramanujacharya* was mainly inspired by the Alvar saint-poets who had marked a trail of powerful tradition of bhakti which a philosopher of the calibre of *Ramanujacharya* furthered and perpetuated. The non-dual thesis of *Shankaracharya* set in a frame of philosophical rigour was controverted by a plethora of Indian thinkers of great repute. The critical treatment that they gave to the Shankaran non-dual thesis gave rise to the philosophical schools of qualified-monism, pure-monism, non-dualism and dual-cum-non-dualism. The new schools of thought with their own specific approach to the issues of philosophy were tagged with the label of *Vaishnavism* which made a significant contribution to the dissemination of 'bhakti' and 'worship' at popular level.

The Alvar saint - poets from Tamil-land fully crystallised the new trend of '*bhakti*' and '*worship*' through their enchanting hymns brimming with intense love of *Vishnu*. Instinctive knowledge of God and His contemplation are the dominant themes of their hymns. The saint-poets are the ardent devotees who have completely resigned themselves to the mercy of Vishnu and have expressed their total dependence on Him for deliverance[6]. The deep impact of Rigveda on the Alvar saint-poets can be realised when they conceptualise the world as the body of Vishnu and feel transported to dizzying levels of ananda by dedicating themselves to His Service. The alvars in their tone and essence are extremely passionate in their yearning which is entirely divergent from coarse and worldy passion. The philosophical frame to the Alvars was provided by the Acaryas like Nathmuni who had attempted their own insightful forays in the realms of philosophy.

The trend-setting wave of '*bhakti*' and 'worship' travelled all the way from south of India to the North where an eminent sage, Ramanand, found it significant for impulsing a new movement of '*bhakti*' and 'worship'. To his numerous disciples he imparted the mantra of '*Ramayanamah*' which unleashed a momentous movement of *bhakti* creating a heightened consciousness at grass-root level to stem the tide of Muslim invasion on the very civilisation and culture of India. Kabir, Guru Nanak, Tulsi Das, Sur Das and other literary luminaries forming vanguard of the movement played their part as *bhaktas* with an amazing sense of history[7].

BHAKTI AND WORSHIP IN KASHMIR SHAIVISHM

Shankaracharya as an immaculate philosopher of non-dual absolutism considered 'bhakti' & 'worship' as antithetical to the rope-snake metaphor that establishes the primacy of knowledge (*Jnān*) in matters of release from the shackles of 'bandan' (bondage). Philosophically speaking, he made no attempt to explore a possibility of developing a concordance between bhakti and worship and his principal thesis of knowledge (Jnān). He thought that any type of reconciliation between bhakti and worship and his thesis of non-dual absolutism would fracture his total fabric of thought.

Kashmir Shaivism, though a philosophy of non-dual absolutism, does not contribute to the Shankaran thesis of exclusion of *bhakti* and worship from the realms of non-dual philosophy. The Shaivites of Kashmir are essentially integrationists who have dialectically maintained the integrity of their non-dual thesis by giving legitimacy to the precepts and practices of bhakti and worship. Kashmir Shaivism has been appraised as 'more monistic than monism itself'. Bhakti and worship as per it do not in any way impair the tone, essence and unity of its predominant thesis. A concordance has been established between bhakti and worship and knowledge (Jnān) by re-naming 'bhakti' as 'atma bhakti' and puja (worship) as 'atma puja' (self-worship).

A *bhakta* conforming to the Shaiva thought cannot perform worship or devote himself to the service of Shiva in a manner that smacks of crude dualism. He sees his own intrinsic essence as Shiva when he worships Shiva and sets up a warm relation of friendship and intimacy with Him. Shiva as per the theoretical asumptions of Kashmir Shaivism has prominent attributes of omniscience, omni-presence, eternity et al. A *bhakta* while devoting himself to Shiva super-imposes the same attributes of Shiva on himself. So does the worshipper. This is how the Shaivite thinkers have resolved the conflict between bhakti and worship and knowledge of Shiva (*Shiva-Jnān*).

The Shaiva *bhakti* is superior to any form of Jnān (knowledge). Successes in the domain of Shaiva-*yoga* do not crystallise without bhakti. Bhakti is both means to an end and an end in itself. The highest knowledge of non-dual philosophy is featured as the highest form of bhakti. Says utapaldev[8]-

Jnanasya parma bhumi yog-asya parma dasha
tvad bhakti ya vibho karhi purnamea syat arthita

Bhakti is considered spiritual knowledge (adhyātam vidhyā). '*Shivo bhutva shivam yajet*' is replaced by '*bhakto bhutva shivam yajet*'. The state of identity with Shiva is not acceptable if its medium is not *bhakti*.

Utpaldev sings[9] –

bhavat bhakti amrit asvadat bodhyasya syat para apiya,
dasha sa mam preti swamin asvasyeva shukhtata

Bhakti is the distilled essence of worship (*puja*). It is more efficacious and helpful in recognising one's essence as Shiva than yoga and its allied practices. yogis strictly practise *yam*, *niyam* and *pretyahar* to come to the state of *samadhi*, but *bhaktas* ascend to the same state through bhakti (devotion) and maintain the state even in active consciousness (*vyuthan*).

Bhakti has been defined as samavesh which means direct entrance into the supreme consciousness of Shiva, '*milan*' is named as '*sukha*' and '*virah*' is named as '*dukha*'. Sukha is perpetual unity with Shiva and dukha is separateness from Shiva. In the lexicon of love-poetry they are usually phrased as '*samyog*' & '*viyog*'. To go to the shelter of Shiva (*sharan*) is to have unity with Shiva in normal active life. A true bhakta wears the same temper and attitude of equipoise when he is in unity with Shiva or when he is in a state of duality.

The Kashmiri Shaivites as celebrated aesthetes have classified bhakti as *rasa*. It is a continuous and perpetual source of joy, happiness and ecstasy. A *bhakta* when in union with Shiva finds himself in the same state of '*anand*' that a lover of wine is immersed in. Bhatta Nayak and Utpaldev apexing an uninterrupted tradition of '*bhakti*' and 'worship' as was prevalent in Kashmir have often used wine as a metaphor. Both are poets of bhakti which, to them, is a rasa that not only intoxicates but also transports to partake of Shiva's consciousness that exudes the nectar of *anand*.

A *bhakta* establishes a personal relationship with Shiva as his *Ishta Deva*. He serves Him devoutly as a servant serves his master. The Shaivites consider the relation of a servant with his master based on '*dasa bhava*' as superior to any other form of relationship with Shiva. He can be His friend. He can even establish a relation of courtship with Shiva. These are the manifold forms of personal relationships that a *bhakta* can choose to forge with Shiva.

Shiva has a transcendental aspect as well. He is consciousness Supreme, something that is not materially tangible. Shiva in His manifest form of *Shakti* is the subject for Shaiva *bhakti*. It is the creative being of Shiva characterised as *chidanand*, that forms the subject and theme of Shaiva *bhakti*. Neglegible examples of impersonal form of *bhakti* are certainly available. But, the dominant relationship that *bhaktas* form with their *Ishta-deva*, Shiva, is intimately and warmly personal.

The Hindu history of Kashmir buttresses the view that Kashmir has been a seat of Shaivism through remote ages. The plethora of gods and goddesses in the Shaiva pantheon have been adored and worshipped. Temples have been built and consecrated to Shiva, Shakti, Kumar, Ganesha and other *bhairavas*. People throng to Shakti-peethas for sacrifices and worship. The devotees firm in faith and conviction melodiously sing vedic mantras and Shiva-stotras. The way they worship establishes that there is a fusion of *vedas* and *agamas* in the methodology. The worship of *Ishta devas* and *Ishta devis* is resorted to as a means to 'deepen the gaze within'.

The worship of a god in a temple has been a standard practice of the Shaivites of Kashmir. Classified as external worship (*bahya*

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puja) it has been doctrinally recognised as beneficial to the initiates on the Shaiva path. To develop a mood of concentration and revert the gaze within, an initiate takes to external worship of any shape and form. Such a worship is categorised as 'anavopaya'. By gradual stages he learns the highest form of *bhakti* and worship which is *'atmabhakti'* and *'atma puja*'.

BHAKTI IN LALLA DED VAAKH

No right thinking person can dispute the status of Lalla Ded as a *Shaiva yogini*. She took to the Shaiva-praxis to recognise her essential worth as Shiva. Lalla Ded was a *bhaktin* too, who is consensually ranked with great *bhaktas* like guru Nanak, Sant Kabir, Meera Bhai, Rai Das, Tulsi Das et al. Prof. B.N. Parimu in his monumental studies on Lalla Ded uneqivocally calls her the fore-runner of the Bhakti Movement in India. As yoga and bhakti are not mutually contradictory to each other, Lalla meticulously practised *bhakti-yoga*. Her self-image as a '*bhàktin*' had fortified her spirits against the zig-zags and adversities of life and world, and had invested her person with absolute equipoise and equanimity of temper and deportment.

Says she –

bo yod shankar bakhach asa
makris sasa mal kya peye

If I be innately devoted to Shiva,
disquiet will find no abode within my heart.

Translation by Dr. Grierson

Lalla Ded had been an ardent devotee of Shiva. When she was a child, she would foot her way to the Shiva temple at Harsheshwar for worship. She continued with the practice after she got married at Padmanpur (Pampore). Chanting of *mantras* and the name of Shiva at the Shiva temples assisted her to gain calmness of mind and concentration too. She took to a plethora of practices till she deepened her spiritual temper and awareness.

As a restless worshipper she joined a guru who put her on a path that could not help her in realising her spiritual yearnings. She gained confidence as a *bhakta* only after she chanced upon a *sat-guru*, a perfect soul, who awakened her into a new consciousness of a true *bhakta* of Shaiva hue and extraction.

As a conscious shaivite, well-groomed in the theory and praxis of Shaivism, Lalla Ded had marched far on the high-road of *bhakti* and worship. Under the insightful guidance and initiation of her sat-guru she realised that real *bhakti* was '*atma bhakti*' and real worship was '*atma puja*'. As shiva is the only subject and we are His emanations, not outside Him, but in Him only, He, therefore, cannot be accessed on the plank of a separate polarity. Bhakti and worship based on a premise that is distinctly separate from Him, are not a source to the spiritual recognition of one's essence as Shiva.

Lalla Ded came to a stage in her spiritual journey where she rose above the formalities of formal worship. That is why she stressed the unity of vital-airs with that of *prān* as *pranna* as essence of Shiva in life.

Resonates Lalla –

deva vata divar vata
pyatha bon chuya ekvat
kas puzi karak hoota bata
kar pranas to pavanas sanghat

The idol is but stone,
The temple is but stone,
From top to bottom all is stone.
Whom will you worship, O stubborn Pandit ?
Let Prana and the mind unite.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Bhakti in Kashmir Shaivism cannot climax until a *bhakta* surrenders himself to the grace (*shaktipat*) of Shiva. This view of Shaivas is buttressed even by Bhagvatgita. Lalla Ded as a Shaiva-bhaktin burnt away the dirts (*malas*) and killed her petty desires to arouse the divine volition (*Iccha*) and surrendered herself to Shiva for grace. Says she –

dali travamus tati

I spread my garment's hem & sat
Just there, on bended knees,
in utter surrender to Him.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Lalla Ded worshipped Shiva as her personal god. She had forged a variety of relationships with Shiva. She served Him as a servant, made friends with Him and loved Him intensely. In such intense moments of love she sang out her love-lorn song to awaken her beloved within her frame for unity and absolute purity. Sings Lalla

pota zooni vathith mot bolnovum
dag lalanavam dayi sanzi prahe
lali lali karan lal vozanovum
meelith tas man shrochyom deh

In the last watch of the moon-lit night,
remonstrating with my wayward mind,
I soothed my pain with the love of God,
Gently, gently, accosting myself,
'Lalla, Lalla, Lalla',
I woke my love, my Lord, my Master,
In whom absorbed, my mind was cleansed
of its defilement by the Ten (or body).

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Lalla Ded was a proud Shaiva-bhaktin who as a self-recognised soul harboured a consciousness of unity with Shiva even when she engaged herself in normal chores and responsibilities of world and life.

Chapter – 8

THE NEED FOR A LALLA DED LEXICON

'To do philosophy is to explore one's own temperament, yet at the same time to attempt to discover the truth'-

Iris Murdok

The very core of Lalla Ded is philosophical and that is why she captures our imagination and tugs at our heart-strings. Her *vaakhs* are so compact and perfect that it is absolutely futile to better them in any manner. The entire repository of *vaakhs* as preserved through generations by our ancestors is a precious civilisational legacy. Now a time has come that her word reflective of her lofty legacy is under a vicious onslaught. Lalla Ded's word was not just a fluke, but, it, in fact, climaxed the entire tradition of thought-processes and aesthetics that were formed, and perpetuated through generations. As an heir to the entire corpus of philosophy and aesthetics she had full awareness of a poet (Kavi) to objectify her experiences, lived and felt, through a word, apt and suitably contextualised.

Poetry (*kavya*) as defined by the Kashmiri aesthetes is word and meaning (*shabadarthaṿ kaṿyum*) which subsequently evolved as the combination of word and meaning (*shabadarthav sahitav kavyam*) at the hands of a galaxy of aesthetes. The very word, *sahit*, during an evolutionary process in aesthetics, came to be the source of the word, *sahitya* (literature) in the domain of Indian aesthetics.

Lalla Ded as revealed by her *vaakhs* was an immaculate scholar of language, both Sanskrit and Kashmiri (*desh bhasha*). As a word-smith she has deftly coined and used apt words to depict her spiritual experiences and yearnings. It is the word that explains her indigenous roots and unbreakable linkages with the civilisational impulse of the land she was born in. Her word is enriching not only 'intellectually and spiritually, but also geographically'. Force and verve of her exceptionally rare word' caused a fright in the mind of Sufi colonisers who resorted to 'medieval forgery' to distort and impale her word. It is Lalla Ded's word that speaks for her splashes of amazing creativity. It is, again, the word that neatly reveals her philosophical culture and spiritual zest and credo.

To preserve and perpetuate the invaluable legacy of Lalla Ded I am attempting to prepare a sort of Lalla Ded-lexicon (*kosha*) with a view to making her *vaakhs* more intelligible to Lalla Ded lovers and also keeping the rootless and deracinated intellectuals and their proteges away from rabidly interfering with the pristine word of Lalla Ded.

Word : **Shiva**

a) One who cuts away sins

Shyati papam iti shiva

b) One who illumines/reveals the universe vasati, to shine

c) One who removes the sleep of ignorance
'sin, to sleep or to dream

Shanker : One who does good to devotees and mankind at large — *sham karoti iti shankerah*

Shakti : The whole universe lies indistinguishably submerged in the consciousness of Shiva. When He wills to see what is in Him, He is Shakti. Absolute freedom (svātantrya) of Shiva to manifest is Shakti. In transcendence Shiva is '*bodh*', Jnān, knowledge. In immanence He is Shakti. There is hardly any object in the world/universe that does not emanate from the consciousness of Shiva. In Kashmir Shaivism Shiva is an absolute non-dual reality. When we speak of Shiva, Shakti is automatically presumed. If Shakti is referred to, Shiva is pre-supposed. Shiva devoid of freedom to create is a dead body. '*Shiva shakti bina shavah*'.

Bhagvan Abhinavgupta puts –

> *Iccha-Jnan-Kriyashakti Svabhavam eva, ...* **shakti** *Vīrhitam Jadakalpam, anyat cha anant shakti paripurnam*[1].

Prakash : Shiva in essence is beyond the world/universe. In this state He is prakash, pure jnān, knowledge or *bodh*. Prakash is His *svarup*, intrinsic reality. In Vedanta it is called '*kutastha rupa*', the fundamental nature of Brahman. Every object that we see around us shines in the prakash, luminosity of Shiva's consciousness. Prakash typifies the transcendence of Shiva.

Vimarsh : Shiva is prakash, no doubt; but He knows that He is prakash. His knowledge about His luminosity (*prakash*) is vimarsha. Khemraja in his work *Parapreveshika* puts thus– 'If Shiva were merely prakash, not also vimarsha, He would be totally inert and powerless'. It can simply be put that if prakash is transcendental Shiva, Vimarsha is His Shakti or immanence in all that exists. Vimarsha can also be called I-consciousness of Shiva. It is because of this I-consciousness that Shiva manifests the world/universe which otherwise lies diluted in His consciousness.

Etymologically vimarsh is formed by the prefix vi + mrsh (root).

Chita : It is the limited form of *Chiti*, which is consciousness supreme. Chita is mind that is constituted by *buddhi*, *aham* and *manas*. As per an eminent Shaiva exponent named Bhasker, Chita and manas are synonymous. Chita is equated with an individual self called *anu, pashu* or *atma*. It is atma, an individual self, as it 'moves on incessantly to different varieties of existence by sticking to *rajas, tamas* and *sattvas*'. Chita serves as a source to feel, think and cognise the Highest Reality, Shiva or Maheshvar.

Chetyate Vimrishyate anena parmam tatvam iti chitam.

Manas : Manas is the same as *chita*. It is the mind that is replete with various forms of desires and thought-constructs. If it is set to look within, it becomes a mantra. If it is directed to outward objects in the world, it becomes messy with *sankalpas* and *vikalpas* (thought-currents). Lexically *samkalpa* and *vikalpala* of *manas* is termed as '*manas vyapar*', mind's activity.

manyate budhyate anena iti manah/mansah

Vijnanbhairava conveys –

manasam chetna shakti atma chetya chatushtayam,
yada priye parikshanam tada tada bhairavam vapu !

Guru : He is the spiritual director. He teaches the highest truth to his disciples. He initiates them through a mantra. He also ferries them across the ocean of nagging doubts and misunderstandings. He bestows them with his grace (shaktipat). A guru is a perfect soul, a Shiva, with a heightened sense of aesthetics. He initiates a pupil, but does not impose himself on his psycho-physical personality. He develops him as a free being after the model of Shiva.

Mantra : It is the divine power clothed in sound. A guru initiates his pupil through a mantra, which is replete with energy and force. A mantra is to be meditated upon to achieve a spiritual destiny. An aspirant identifies himself with the deity that is invoked in the mantra. After meditating upon it, he becomes the mantra. To realise the potency of a mantra, a seeker has to have initiative and self-will. The Vedic rishis were '*mantra drshtara*'.

Etymologically, mantra is formed with man + suffix tran and is explained as '*mannat trayate iti mantra*'.

Akula : It is a lexical word drawn from the Agamas. The kashmiri Shaivites have accepted the word with its meaning to buttress their concept of Shiva as a non-dual absolute. *Akula* is Shiva in transcendence. He is *akula* because He has no *kula* (family) and has not manifested the world/universe from His own essence.

Kula : *Kula* is Shakti, Shiva's immanence in all that exists in the world. *Akula* is subtle, kula is gross. it is gross because akula as shakti manifests itself in gross objects of the world/universe.

Bhasker Roy, an authority on Tantras, puts –

> *kulam shakti iti prokhtam, akulam shiva uchyate,*
> *kulakula sambandah kaulam iti abhideeyate !*

Kularnava Tantra reiterates the same thesis about *akula* and *kula* :—

> *akulam Shivah iti ukhtam, kulam shakti prakitite*
> *kulakul anusandhane nipunah kaulika priye*

Shunya : *Shunya* is a word drawn from the Buddhist texts. In fact, Nagarjun built a whole philosophical thesis on shuniya, which in translation means void or emptiness. In Kashmir Shaivism the word was accepted, but, invested with a new shade of meaning. The word 'shunya' in meaning is '*abhava*' which becomes '*bhava*' if prefix 'a' is deleted. 'a' stands for Shiva and many other names typifying Shiva. '*bhava*' stands for objects in the world/universe. So, Shuniya, to Lalla Ded, is the state of consciousness of Shiva in which the world of objects lies merged in an unmanifest form. Such a concept of shunya is positive as against its negative ring of meaning that the Buddhists conveyed through it. A quote from a Shaiva text conveys –

ashyuyam shunyam iti ukhtam shunyat cha abhava ishyate!
abhava satu vijneyo yatra bhava layam gata !!

Nad & Bindu : The two lexical terms having their origins in the Agamās are vital to the understanding of Lalla Ded as a poetess wedded to the Shaiva thought. Bindu is perfect, luminous, eternal and metaphysical locus in consciousness supreme. Nada is the expansion (*visfār*) of Bindu to mainfest that what lies submerged in Bindu. Bindu is prakash (luminosity) and Nada is vimarsha (I-consciousness). Bindu has layers of expansion, prasar or visfār from a kala, also called Chita-kala to anand shakti (aa), Iccha shakti (e,e,), Jnān shakti (u,u) and kriya-shakti (re-ow). As the locus of luminous and perfect consciousness Bindu has eight layers of outward expansion. It has to be understood that the expansion happens inside the consciousness supreme, not outside it.

In the words of Prof. Nila Kanth Gurtu *prakash* at the level of *chiti* is Bindu and *prakash* at the level of *chita* is Nada^{2}.

Oum : Lalla Ded as an initiated Shaivite has alluded to *oum* as a *bija-mantra*. To her, oum & aham as two bija-mantras have the same significance and import. In a particular vaakh she has used the word '*anahat*' in place of oum or pranav, a vedic mantra. *Anahat*, to her, is not the fourth station in the process of awakening the *kundalini* that as per yogic texts lies coiled up in a state of sleep at *'muladhaar'*. *Anahat*, to her, is the same as Bindu and Nada. It is '*pranav*', an enternal, unhindered sound, *oum*. This very 'pranav' when in a state of unity with consciousness supreme or Shiva is Bindu and when in expansion, visfar, for outward emanation is Nada. The entire word-hoard from 'a' to 'h' when lying in total submergence in consciousness supreme (chiti) is Bindu, but its evolution through various stages of para vaak, pashyanti, madhyama and vaikhuri is Nada. Bindu, therefore, is the locus of both expansion and assimilation (*samaahaar*).

Mudra : Literally, the word mudra means disposition of various limbs of human body in particular forms and shapes. Lalla Ded has used the word in a spiritual sense. Well-versed in the Shaiva-texts she was aware of *khecari mudra* that denotes a psycho-physical posture enabling a seeker to move about in absolute freedom in the skies of consciousness. In the Āgamic texts mudra has been explained in various ways. Mudra is that which gives joy (*mudam dadati*). Mudra, again, is that which removes bondage (bandhan), (mum dravyati) Khechari mudra is a name for Shiva. It explains His condition. Lalla Ded has referred to '*chopimudri*', which is the condition of Buddha. The disposition of silence is a type of yoga mainly practised by the Buddhists and some Hindu Hath-Yogis. As Lalla Ded did not subscribe to Hathyoga, she pours out that one cannot enter Shiva's consciousness through the disposition of silence (chopi mudri).

Anamya : The Lord Shiva in His inherent nature (svabhava) is beyond the objective world/universe. But, He has a natural tendency to manifest the objective world/universe that lies submerged in Him. The equipoise between His transcendence and tendency to manifest (shakti) is what is called anamya or niramaya. In this condition of Shiva all objects (bhavas) are beyond the limitations of time and space (desh and kaal) and lie in absolute identity with Shiva's consciousness only in the form of impressions or images.

In the words of Prof Nila Kanth Gurtu *anamaya* is the luminosity of all-pervading, transcendental and ever-shining consciousness of Shiva wherein I-consciousness (*vimarsh*) is embedded[3].

Pratyabhijjna – It is a lexical word in Kashmir Shaivism. Drawn from the Buddhist scriptures and philosophies Kashmiri Shaivites dressed it with a new layer of philosophical meaning. Pratyabhijjna is the metaphor of the theoretical frame of Kashmir Shaivism and *spanda* as expounded by Bhatta Kallat is the practical aspect of the theory of Shaivism. In absolute concordance with the six systems of Indian philosophy, Kashmir Shaivism too has delineated its position on *mokṣa*, liberation from bondage. The word moksa though often used by the Shaivites connotes and denotes Pratyabhijjna which means to recognise one's essence as Shiva. As an absolute free being Shiva assumes a limitation through his own potency called as Māyā-Shakti and is reduced to the position of a Jiva. He forgets His essentiality as a transcendental being and assumes the form and role of a Jiva. Pratyabhijjna is to recognise the essential nature of Shiva. As stipulated by Bhagvan Abhinavgupta moksa is neither on earth, nor is it ascension into heavens. It is just to burst the meshes of ignorance caused by three dirts (*malas*) of *anavamal, karmamal* and *mayiyamal* and cognise one's unlimited potencies. Phrased as 'svarup prathnam[4] Pratyabhijjna is revelation of the intrinsic nature of a Jiva. Moksa in terms of Pratybhijjna is '*sva-shakti abhivyakhta*'[5] which means expression of one's intrinsic potencies or powers.

In Kashmiri language Pratyabhijjna is '*paan praznavun*', to cognise one's essential essence as Shiva. As a lexical term it finds mention by all the poets who are in the line of Lalla Ded tradition or have swerved away from it as a result of '*dislocated sensibility*'.

Jivan-mukhta — It is an expression that Lalla Ded has often used in her inspiring and mesmerising vaakhs. Come to her from Shaivism she always explains and expresses it in the same tenor. *Jivan-mukti* is an ideal with the Shaivites, who are keen to attain moksa, liberation in the sense of self-recognition (atma Pratyabhijjna) while living in the world. A man normally attains moksa, liberation at the moment of death as he ceases to get enmeshed in the worldly acts which burden him with morality or immorality of performed acts. But, attainment of moksa while in life is a state of perfection in which a man is absolutely free to will and act. He is enlightened and has absolute oneness with Shiva. To attain moksa while in life is the climaxing of the trajectories that shaivites act out as devotees or seekers either independently or under the aegis of a Shiva-guru. A Jivan-mukhta does not carry any burden of limitations that would inhibit or restrict his freedom. He is in the world and the world is in him. He lives his life as a free being and commits himself to the cause of awakening others to attain *Jivan-mukhti*. He could have died, but chooses not to die because of his avowed commitment to awaken his fellow-beings to authenticate their lives through realisation of their essential svarup as Shiva.

As a Jivan-mukta, Lalla Ded had destroyed all her *karmas* and ceased to accumulate them the fruit of which otherwise she had to reap. She had freed herself from the rotating wheel of life and death and had attained the status of an immortal. From the status of Shaiva-yogini Lalla Ded came to be known and recognised as Lalla-the Immortal.

Krai — It is the Kashmiri version of *kriya*, a word in Sanskrit. It means an act that is both elevating and ennobling. It is not *karam* that a Jiva performs in routine life the fruit of which is to be borne at all costs and under all circumstances. The distinction between *kriya* and karam has to be understood for fuller comprehension of Lalla Ded vaakhs. As per Kashmir Shaivism Shiva is an active agent, a doer who performs five acts (*panch kritya*) of *Srshti, sithiti, samhar, pidhan* and *anugrah*. He is not inert like *Brahman* of the Shankar vedant. He acts and His actions are termed as '*kriya*'. A Jiva who in essence is Shiva only acts to exist and live in the world. As his actions are limited in scope and extent, they are termed as '*karam*'. *Krai*, therefore, is not a limited action but a free act that is elevating and ennobling. The essence of *krai* is Shiva and His enlightening consciousness.

Nund Rishi who is in the line of Lalla Ded tradition carries the word *krai* bearing the same imprint of Shiva as an active agent. Unaware of its core meaning the Islamists of foreign origins and their local proxies have not succeeded in cleansing his shrukhs (slokas) of the word '*krai*', rich with indigenous semantics.

Nagai Nachun — It is an expression of sheer ecstasy which has been an issue of debate among genuine Lalla Ded scholars. The guys who have pawned their souls to the foreign Sayyid-sufis have misused it as a source to the myth that Lalla Ded roamed about naked through the main-fares of her native place.

One can glean from her vaakhs that Lalla Ded was not a hath-yogini and moderation, a golden-mean in Aristotelian terminology, was a prized value with her. The life of a recluse had not charmed her. Denial of essentials to maintain her body was not an igredient of her world-view. She was more than aware of the efficacy of human body as the source-material to the attainment of *ạtma̱-pratya̱bhịjjna*, self-recognition as Shiva. The Shaivite perspective of human body as a miniature form of the entire cosmos was what had moulded her whole course of Shaiva-Yoga praxes.

Lalla Ded's philosophy of moderation gains prominence when she unequivocally exhorts all the un-initiates to clothe themselves so as to keep cold away from harming their bodies and also to have such food as satiates their appetite. In the light of this philosophy it is in no way pertinent to explain and construe '*nangai nachun*' as dancing or roaming about naked.

In Indian aesthetics there are three layers of meaning a word can have. The indicative meaning, *abhidha-arth*, of '*nangai nachun*' is absolutely crude and does not concur with the philosophy that Lalla Ded was wedded to. It fails to convey her emotion, determining her psycho-physical behaviour. The second layer of meaning called *lakhshanic-arth* too does not convey her real emotion. The third layer of meaning '*dhvanyatmac arth*', translated as suggestive meaning alone establishes it as an expression of extreme joy or ecstasy as a response to the key that her guru introduces to her for attainment of identity with Shiva.

Prān and apān — We as humans exhale and inhale. It is happening involuntarily. Life depends on this process of breathing out and breathing in. In Shaiva-Yoga we have been given an astral body (yogic body) which is not the same body that is defined in human physiology. As per the Shaiva-Yoga texts air that we breathe out is called prān and air that we breathe in is known as *apān*. Prān, actually called prān-vāyu, emerges from *hridai*, heart (not the actual human heart) and stops at *bahya-dvadashant*. Apān, lexically called *apān-vāyu*, emerges at *bahya-dvadashant* and stops at *hridai*, heart. The entire process of breathing out and breathing in is connected with two nerves called *Ida* and *pingla*, one on the left side and the other on the right side of *Sushumna-nadi*, lexically known as *madhya-dam* in Shaiva-yoga. It is called *madya-dam* for it is soaked in Shiva's luminosity. Prān and apān though to be cultivated assiduously through prānāyām are of little value in matters of attaining moksa, liberation. In Shaiva-yoga both the vāyus are supposed to bind a man to the meshes of ignorance because of their natural tendency to flow outwards. But, the other two airs (vāyus) called *udān* and *vyān* to be cultivated through diligent practice liberate a man from primal ignorance. Air that is breathed out (prān) is usually hot and air that is breathed in (apān) is generally cool. In Lalla Ded vaakhs *prān* has been described as hot and apān as cool and their nexus with *madhya-dam* has been vitally important for gaining moksa, liberation from birth and death.

Abhyās — It is a Sanskrit word that denotes regular practice. Breathing out and breathing in is a practice that a seeker has to repeat at a regular pace. Such a practice known as prān-abhyās removes the dis-balance or conflict called *ksobha* between the two airs (*vāyus*) of *prān* and *apān*. Through *prān-abhyās* the two airs (*vāyus*), *prān* and *apān*, enter *sushmana-nādi (madhya-dam)* via *mulādhār* and move upwards in the direction of *udān* resulting in pacification of all manner of conflicts.

In such a yogic condition pristine powers of mind (*chita*) get awakened. Pavan, a Sanskrit word, meaning air denotes *prān-vāyu* and *apān-vāyu* in the Shaiva-Yoga lexicon.

Sagun — It means anything that has a form or an attribute. '*Nirgun*' is its antonym. In the domain of Hindi poetry Lord Ram and Lord Krishna are the themes of Tulsidas and Surdas, who belonged to the *sagun* branch of Bhakti (devotional) poetry. But, in Shaiva-Yoga, the word *sagun* carries a different nuance of meaning. It refers to the world that Shiva manifests from the screen of His own consciousness without using any materials external to Him. *Sagun* is Shiva's shakti and His Shakti is manifestation of all that we perceive in the world. *Sagun*, in other words, is immanence of Shiva in the world of objects (neel, peet etc).

Shya van — Most of the commentators of Lalla Ded Vaakhs have explained '*shya van*' as 'six forests' meaning as six chakras or Shakti *chakras* as mentioned in Patanjali's Yoga-sutra. But the word '*van*' in terms of philology is derived from Sanskrit word '*udvan*', which means a path.

As available in the Shaivite texts six paths are *mantra, vama, pada, kala, tattava* and *bhuvan*. An aspirant seeking ascension is required to traverse through them for attainment of identity with Shiva. Bhagvan Abhinavgupta has delineated incisive details about each path including the methodology for traversing it. As a Jiva, seeking the original abode of Shiva, an aspirant has to ascend through each path, one after the other. Lexically called '*aaroha*', this rise in a gradual manner enables an aspirant to grasp the intrinsic nature of all the thirty-six *tattvas* (elements) that constitute the world that is perceptible and palpable. Realisation also dawns on him that Shiva is immanent in all the tattvas (elements) that form the architecture of the world.

Panch, dah ta kah — Strange meanings have been attributed to the lexical terms of *panch, dah ta kah* by ignoramuses who are on a mission to distort and decimate the indigenous content of Lalla Ded vaakhs. Some have interpreted it as the prevalence of many faiths and sects in conflict with one another, while many others have distorted their meanings only to suit their fanciful imaginings.

Panch (five) refers to five *mahabhutas* that are the principal and basic constituents of the whole universe. These five mahabhutas are earth, water, fire, wind and space. All tomes of the Indian philosophy from Rigveda to the modern writings make a mention of five mahabhutas.

Dah (ten) refers to five karam-*indriyani* (motor senses) and five *Jnān-indriyani* (cognitive senses). Five *karam-indriyani* are *upastha, payu, pada, hasta,* and *vak*. Five *jnān-indriyani* are *gran, rasana, darshan, sparsa,* and *shrvan.*

Kah (*eleven*) signifies five motor senses and five cognitive senses and *antahkaran* generally translated as mental perception. Antahkaran is taken as only one though it constitutes *man, buddhi* and *ahankar.*

Ada kyazi ravihe kahan gava—Lalla Ded has used cow as a metaphor of '*atma pratyabhijjna*', self-recognition, which she pursued as her spiritual destiny. *Kah (eleven)* as a collection of all human senses are required to be harnessed and focused to realise the spiritual destination. Kashmir Shaivism has lent absolute credence to human body as a vehicle for the attainment of self-recognition. It is defined as a miniature form of the entire cosmos. An aspirant, therefore, has to cultivate his senses, not by suppression, but by sublimation so that he concentrates them to achieve the higher ends of spirituality. Eyes have to be withdrawn from outside world of objects to deepen the gaze within. Mind (man) as a constituent of mental perception has to be pacified with a view to ridding it of conflicts and raging mental activities. The united action of all senses that a human body is invested with is vitally critical to the unfoldment or expansion of inner-self. At a particular stage of her quest Lalla Ded woefully lamented that her wayward senses had ravaged her body. Had they all focused and acted unitedly she would have realised her spiritual destination. Her success in stringing the human senses into a bond of unity made her spiritual destiny realisable. The Indian scriptures describe human body as 'brahma mandir' (God's temple). A verse from Kalidasa highlights the vital importance of human body in matters of spirituality. The verse reads -

api sva-shakhtya tapsi pravartate,
shareeram adhyam khalu dharam sadanam.

Sodur — It is a Kashmiri word drawn from *'samudra'* which is Sanskritic in its origins. Throughout the Indian lore and learning world (*bhava or samsar*) has been compared to an ocean. Among many words *samsar* is the main word for world which is defined as '*samsarti iti samsarah*' – world is that which moves on. Sodur also is in constant ripple and motion. Hence the compound word '*samsar-sagar*' or '*samsar-samudra*' or 'bhava-sagar'.

Sodur (ocean) either independently or in combination with '*samsar*' (world) typifies ocean of ever-changing world and existence. Lalla Ded, an Indian in thought and deed, is profoundly conscious of the ever-changing and transient nature of world and existence at large. As a seeker she knows that she is immersed in the transience of world and existence and is keen on crossing the ocean of world and getting back to the original abode of Shiva. That is why Lalla Ded says – *'zuva chum braman gara gacha ha*'. '*Sadur*' as a huge expanse of water has a civilisational connotation too. It establishes that Lalla Ded was a product of water-civilisation which she perpetually breathed and assiduously perpetuated and hilariously celebrated.

Sahaz — *Sahaz* is the Kashmiri version for *sahaj* which is a word in Sanskritic word-hoard. Its translation in English is 'natural'. A version of Buddhism called *'sahaj-yani Buddhism*' has imbued the word '*sahaj*' with philosophical meanings. '*Sahaj*' represents the highest element that forms with the conflation of "*prajna*' and '*upaya*'. The concept of '*sahaj*' has travelled to Kashmir Shaivism and has been used as a qualifying word with '*vidya*', *'Ishvar, 'yoga'* and *'anand'*. Hence in Shaivism we have expressions like '*sahaj vidya*', *'sahaj Ishavar', sahaj yoga' and 'sahaj anand'* .

In the cluster of methodologies *(upayas) anupaya* known as methodless-method has been taken for pratyabhijjna. The Shaivite texts describe it as *sahaj-upaya*, a simple or natural method. *Sahaj* has also been used as a metaphor of Reality the detailed discussion of which forms the warp and woof of Kashmir Shaivism and multifarious expressions of Indian thought.

Laya — The yoga-tattva-upanishad has delineated four types of yoga-mantra-yoga, laya-yoga, hatha-yoga and raj-yoga. Laya-Yoga as a recognised form of yoga has found a mention in almost all works on yoga. Laya-yoga definitionally is concentration on a deity while one is actively involved in the daily routine of life. The Kashmri Shaivites equally accept laya-yoga as a means to attain identity with Shiva. In shaktopaya a seeker deems it an achievement if he succeeds in dissolving his mind (man) in chita. Layi-bhava as a lexical term conveys the same dissolution of mind in chita. But, to a highly accomplished seeker, laya means immersion of a jiva in shiva as consciousness supreme.

Jnān and ajnān — These two terms have been used variously by all manner of Indian philosophers. Jnān, simply speaking, has two meanings, one is intellectual and the other is spiritual. Intellectual knowledge as per the shaivites of Kashmir does expand the understanding horizons of a seeker. It is incumbent on him to learn the use of logic and analysis to have a thorough grasp of the non-dual thesis of Kashmir Shaivism. The said-philosophy has intricacies which need be understood for sharpening of human intellect. But, intellectual knowledge is not the end in itself. It has to be tooled to achieve spiritual knowledge which like all Indian thinkers the Shaivite thinkers designate as real knowledge. So, Jnān, to them, is spiritual in nature and essence. They call it Shiva-Jnān and atma-jnān.

As Shiva and Jiva are of the same fibre and weave, a jiva entrapped by three dirts (malas) of anava-mal, karma-mal and mayiya-mal has to realise his essential nature (svarup) through Shiva-Jnān and atma-jnān.

The essential thesis of Kashmir Shaivism is that Shiva through his absolute freedom (svātantrya) forgets his essential nature to assume the form of a jiva. Under the wraps of forgetfulness a Jiva takes his not-self as his real self. It is lexically called ajnan . It can be said that false identity with human body and human ego is ajnan. But, the Shaivites never comprehend ajnan as total absence of jnān. To them, ajnān is mita-jnān, little knowledge or limited knowledge. The concept of bondage they trace to ajnān, limited knowledge. Bondage (bandhan) is essentially for a jiva. Shiva is beyond any taints of bondage (bandhan). As per the shaivites ajnān is non-knowledge of one's own intrinsic nature (svarup).

Sham & dam — In Patanjali yoga and other works on yoga *sham* and *dam* have been accepted as vital parts of yoga-praxes. Sham means to wean one-self away from the worldly actions (karmas). Dam means to control the breathing process (prān and apān) which otherwise is involuntary. Patanjali defines yoga as "*yogash cha chit vriti nirodah*'. The yoga-practices like *sham & dam* are in concordance with the definition that Patanjali has formulated about yoga. yoga, to him, is to suppress (nirodaha) the innate and inborn urges, tendencies and proclivities of a man. But, the Kashmir Shaivites have moved away from the Patanjalian explication of yoga and phrased yoga as per their own conceptual frame. To them, yoga definitionally is *yogam ektavam icchanti vastuno anyena vastuna* — unity of a thing (Jiva) with another thing (Shiva). The word suppression, nirodha, is replaced by unity, ektavam. The six-limbed yoga-praxes of the Shaivites called *Shadānga yoga retains sham & dam*, but stand oriented to a new nuance of meaning. Sham, therefore, is defined as *to stay put in a felt spiritual experience* after pacifying the worldly disturbances that ravage a human mind, Dam is to sublimate the breathing processes (prān and apān) with a view to submerging them in madhya-dham where the heart (hridai) lies.

In an oft-quoted vaakh Lalla-Ded says that Shiva if to be attained does not need *sham & dam* (self-continence and self-control). It is a clear-cut reference to the suppressive techniques as envisaged in the Patanjali yoga. She for one was groomed in the Shaiva-techniques that are repugnant to suppression and regression of what lies in the nature of man as a living and existing being.

Chidanand — In Kashmir Shaivism Chidanand (chit and anand) is the essential nature of Shiva. Sat (being) is presumed when Shiva is formulated as Chidanand. As we have in Shankar vedant, sat-chit-anand is the fundamental nature (kutasthasvarup) of Brahman as an absolute. But in the Shaivite structure of thought Shiva's fundamental nature (kutastha svarup) is chidanand only. Chit (consciousness) and anand (instinctive playfulness) are deemed as two in number, but in actuality are mixed up as milk and water. Lexically, chit and anand are prakash (luminosity) and vimarsh (I-consciousness). Shiva as Chita (chitti) is beyond the physical world, to put it properly He is transcendental. But Shiva as anand is brimming with a deep sense of I-consciousness. Anand is the creativity of Shiva. The nuts and bolts of entire cosmos are the expression of Shiva as anand. It is anand that features Shiva as an absolute free being to will, create, know and act. The five acts (pancha-kretya) that Shiva does are out of anand, His playfulness or sportiveness. In Shaiva texts it is expressed as 'kreeda-vilas'.

Maha-vreties-oum bhur-bhuva-svaha —

The *Gayatrimantra* begins with *oum-bhur-bhuva-svaha*. Its origins lie in the vedas. As vedas have been characterised as 'plexus of ceremonies', the mantras like *oum bhursvaha, oum bhuva svaha and oum sva svaha* are resonantly pronounced during the offerings that are made to the fire-god (agni). These three mantras are known as *maha-vreties*. But, the fourth maha-vrety is the mantra of *oum bhur-bhuva-sva svaha* which is uttered as one mantra in the wake of the first three mantras that are uttered during the course of a yajna. Having their origins in the vedas, the Kashmiri Shaivites have incorporated the four maha-vreties in their thought structure, but have oriented them to a new shade of semantics. Khemraj as an erudite commentator on seminal Shaiva-texts writes that 'bhu' refers to the world of objects, 'bhuva' to the means of knowledge and 'svah' to the humans, each as a subject. These three maha-vreties refer to the manifested world that Shiva creates out of His playfulness (anand). In Shaiva terminology it is also called vimarsa. The fourth maha-vrety of *oum bhur-bhuva-sva svaha* as one single mantra alludes to transcendental Shiva in whom the first three maha-vreties remain diluted indistinguishably. The first three maha-vreties explain the world and can be lexically called descent (avaroh) and the fourth one is Shiva in which the world gets absorbed and can be lexically called āroh[6] (ascent).

Vaakh — Vaakh if translated into English means a word that is said. It belongs to the Sanskrit word-hoard. *Bhartrihari* as a reputed scholar of linguistics has given us the concept of '*shabad-brahma*' to which he traces the genesis of words formed with the combination of letters in Sanskrit. But, the Shaivites of Kashmir have given us a theory about the genesis of word in concordance with their thought imperatives. Shiva, to them, is the absolute. The word prior to its concretisation remains absolutely diluted in the ocean of Shiva's consciousness. But, His consciousness has its own dynamics which is lexically called vimarsa. The word at this level is known as para-vakh. As the world emanates from Shiva's consciousness, word also emanates from it only. The journey of the word starts from para-vakh, comes to the level of pashyanti, then to the level of madhyama and finally to the level of vaikhuri. It is the descent of a word coming to the level of world where communication and contact are established through it. A word is a combination of letters from 'a' to 'ksa'. The word-hoard from 'a' to 'ksa' as numerous energies of para-vakh remain submerged in Shiva's consciousness. Their concretisation through the process of descent is the same as manifestation of the world from the dynamics of Shiva's consciousness. Says Abhinavgupta-Vakhti Vishvam abhilapti pretyavmarsena iti cha vakh

Mala — It is a Sanskrit word meaning dirt or impurity. In

Kashmir Shaivism it is a lexical word having a special meaning. Shiva as the highest subject has absolute freedom to act. It is through the instrumentality of *mala*, His own creation, Shiva assumes the form of a jiva, worldling with the limited powers to will, know, act and cogitate. As per the Shaivites of Kashmir, *mala* is the cause of ajnān (malam ajnanam icchanti). A jiva is a bound animal (pasu) because of the malas he is trapped in.

Mala is of three types, ānav-mala, kārma-mala and māyiya-mala. Anav-mala is the limitation caused by Shiva through His wilful act of losing His absolute freedom and assuming forgetfulness of His innate freedom. Shiva in His inherent svarup (nature) can perform any act without any let or hindrance and without any external aid-materials. But, it is through His own divine will that He loses His absolute freedom and gets embroiled in the worldy acts of mean order. It is called kārma-mala. Through His own absolute freedom Shiva emanates the universe from His own creative consciousness and is in absolute harmony with what He creates or emanates. But, because of māyiya-mala, He finds a dis-connect with what he has manifested. This is called māyiya-mala.

Malas are a limitation, in fact a plethora of limitations, which Shiva assumes to take the form of a jiva. For this, He has no motivation, He may do it or may not do it. But, he goes on assuming the limitations to become a Jiva out of His own playfulness (anand).

Kashmir Shaivism has made a mention of seven pramatas (subjects) who are classified on the basis of malas they are embroiled in. Sakala, pralāyakal and vijnānakal have all the three impurities in them. Mantra has two malas only, māyiya-mala and ānav-mala. Mantreshvar and mantra-maheshvar have only one mala and that is ānav-mala. Shiva as the only subject, despite His act of assuming impurities, has no taints or impurities that can inhibit His absolute freedom. The value that Jivas trapped in malas pursue is to remove the malas through shaiva-yoga praxes and recognise their essence as Shiva onlyand that is, jnān or atma-jnān.

Tantra — Kashmir Shaivism in essentia has tantric foundations, but is not in any manner repugnant to the vedic stream of thought, lore and learning. In the vedas tantra as a word has been used as a loom (Rig-veda and Atharva-ved). The Mimansakas use the word in the sense of a method for making or doing something. A word like tantra-ukhti denotes 'principles' or 'expositions'. The word tantra is also used for all types of works on subjects relating sciences. The philosophical meaning that the word tantra assumed refers to a 'scripture that spreads knowledge' — *tanyate vistaryate jnanam iti tantram*. At a later stage tantra got hyphenated with mantra and came to be recognised as knowledge realisable through practices.

Kashmir has a protracted history of writing tantras, which could be classified as non-dual tantras, dual-non-dual tantras and dual tantras. With the strands of theoretical knowledge scattered over the whole repository of tantras the Kashmiri Shaivites wove their fabric of non-dual philosophy and finessed it as a thought-process through dexterous use of logic, exposition and subtle analysis. Sixty-four in number the non-dual tantras form the fundamental blueprint of the thought-structure that emerged from Kashmir the seeds of which were planted in the soil of Kashmir from the same thought, though of a different variety, flourishing in South of India.

The principal trantras that the Kashmiri Shaivites have commented upon and used them as source-materials are:-

Shiva-sutra, Netra-tantra, vigjnan Bhairav, Malini-vijayotra tantra, paratrimshikha, Rudrayamal Tantra, mregendra tantra, svacchand tantra et al.

It is pertinent to put that tantras do not present a thought process that can be construed as a finished-product of thought. They contain what we call as seed-ideas, which the Shaivite thinkers used to fabricate a full-fledged philosophical structure, which is well-knit, fully cemented, delicate in details and aesthetic in value.

In the words of Osho, 'where yoga ends, tantra begins'. The highest peak of yoga is the beginning of tantra and tantra leads you to the ultimate goal'[7].

Sahasrar — It is the highest cerebral region above the end of susumuna-nadi and its filaments are red. On its pericarp is hamsa and above it is Shiva himself. Above all these are surya and candra mandalas. In the candra-mandala is a dazzling triangle where sixteenth kala of the moon resides. The subtle-aspect of it is nirvan-kala within which lives Shiva and Shakti as para-vindu. The Shakti of para-bindu is called as nirvana-shakti which is light and exists in the form of hamsa (Rudra-yamal tantra).

Shyashi-kala, Shyashi-rasa — After a yogi explores his nadis (nerves), he awakens his kundalini shakti at muladhar, which is supposed to be the seat of Shakti. He traverses through the six-cakras or six-forests or six paths and raises his inherent powers, which otherwise lie in dormancy. Then he comes upon the Shyashi-kala, candra-kala (digit of the moon) residing in Sahasrar. A rasa, translated as manna in English, oozes out from shyashi kala. A yogi licks is up avidly which transports him into a state of rapturous bliss. Licking up of shyashi-rasa establishes the union of a yogi with Shiva and union is ultimate immersion in Shiva's ocean of consciousness.

Many Kashmiri poets very much in the line of Lalla Ded tradition have frequently mentioned the spiritual union which they might have in the wake of the manna that they enjoyed as an oozing from Shyashi-kala or Chandra-kala. Such poetry of these poets has been wrongly designated as 'sufi poetry'. Popularly nomenclatured as **shastra**, the Muslim poets followed the much-reverenced tradition of Lalla Ded who had linkages with the indigenous inheritance of bhakti (devotion) and philosophy of Shaiva thought.

Brahma-randra — Its synonym is *brahma-bill*. It is situated at the upper part of Ajna-Cakra within the centre of two eye-brows. A seeker seeking self-recognition concentrates on it for direct entry into sahasrar. The Kashmiri Shaivas hold that brahma-randra is closed by the 'egg of shakti' which among other eggs of māyā, prakriti and prithivi lies in a state of dilution in the womb of Shiva's consciousness. A seeker, who has awakened his dormant powers through Shaiva yoga praxes, can surmount the obstruction posed by the 'egg of shakti' and enter sahasrar which as per Shaiva stipulations is nothing but the auspicious consciousness of Shiva.

Jin — It is a Pali word with its origins in '*Jit*', a word in Sanskrit language. The root of the word '*Jit*' is '*Ji*'. It is often used for Mahavir, the founder of Jain Dharam. It is also used for Buddha, the founder of Buddhism. As Kashmir Shaivism has accepted many seed-ideas and concepts from Buddhism, the word '*Jin*' as a lexical word for Buddha stands splashed through many a Shaiva-text. The word '*Jin*' denotes Buddha who has conquered his senses which are eleven in number. The conquest of senses for any seeker is a must as it is a prelude to the quest within. Shiva, keshav, and kamalajnath (Brahma) form the trinity and Lalla Ded has placed *Jin*, the Buddha alongwith three gods of Hindu pantheon, thereby raising the number to four. As all these gods are the symbols of Param-Shiva's infinite powers, Lalla Ded in all politeness prays to them to remove the sickness of the world that has overwhelmed her whole being. Semitic gods are jealous of one another, but the Hindu gods have no such taint.

Anāhat nād — A sound is produced when two objects strike against each other. A river or a brook that flows on produces a sound. But, in a human body a sound is produced involuntarily without striking against anything. This is why it is named as anāahat-nād. It can be heard by a seeker who has diligently trained his ears through shaiva-yoga practices. In Tantraloka, Bhagwan Abhinavgupta has made a mention of ten types of anāhat-nād. Bartrihari sought its origins in the '*shabad-brahma*'. But in Kashmir Shaivism its origins lie in parā-vakh, which during its descent comes to the level of pashyanti,then to madhyama and finally to vaikhuri. A seeker has to withdraw his ears from sounds that are heard in objective world. He has to move up to the level of madhyama and then to pashyanti. During this inward journey he comes to realise the softer aspect of sounds that are gross. Finally he comes to the level of parā-vakh which he has to concentrate on. It leads him to Shiva's consciousness where all sounds lie submerged without having any distinctiveness.

Ajapa hamsa mantra — It is directly related to prān and apān as breathing out and breathing in.It is in the *madhya-nadi* when prān-vāyu goes up from *hriday* (heart) a sound like '*ham*' is produced and when it returns from dvadashant as apān-vāyu, a sound like '*sah*' is produced. A Jiva lives because of the breathing out and breathing in processes. As this process goes on non-stop, a seeker is suggested to meditate on the mantra of '*hamsa-hamsa*', meaning 'I am that'. A Jiva is also called *hamsa* because he is ever busy in breathing-out and breathing-in processes.

This '*hamsa mantra*' is featured as '*ajapa*', which means that it is not meditated upon. At the level of a Jiva the sounds of '*ham*' & '*sah*' are grossly uttered. But, in the processes of inward journey the said-sounds lose their grossness and get merged in the luminosity of Shiva. So, in that case *hamsa* as mantra is neither to be uttered nor is it to be meditated upon. It becomes an indissoluble part of consciousness supreme.

Chapter — 9

THE TRADITION OF LALLA DED

'Lalla-Ded wrote her poetry with fury and passion and even with intellectual arrogance. Her poetry came to her in a fit of emotion, seized her whole being and inspired her to vomit gems of Kashmiri literature. Lalla Ded vaakhs are forceful enough to hit you on the face before you realise what has hit you. More, importantly, you should not read or hear them in English translation'.

Bilhan Koul, Kashmir Sentinel, Nov, 2006.

Fire and fury, spirit and passion, fervour and zest are the distinguishing hall-marks of Lalla-Ded Vaakhs which deeply entrench her credentials as an outstanding poet. She was innately gifted with exemplary 'pretibha' which in the realms of Sanskrit aesthetics is explained as a faculty to imagine, think and articulate thoughts, ideas, feelings, emotions and experiences having a ring of novelty and creativity (nav-nav unmesh-shaalini prajna). Her vaakhs are extremely poignant and have an amazing resonance. In fact, she was a wizard of expression, word and phrase. The equivalent of poet in Sanskrit language is kavi, which Lalla-Ded was, highly knowledgeable and self-recognised soul (atma pratyabhijna).

Lalla-Ded was a miracle. But, for this miracle to happen, diligent spade-work was invested by an array of poets, poetasters, rhapsodists, folk-lorists and even those who wrote doggerel, much below the mark of what is accepted as impressive poetry. Prior to the happening of Lalla-Ded miracle, a meaningful tradition had already shaped out with set and visible contours which worked as a support-base for Lalla-Ded to take-off into horizons that were determined by her personal accomplishments and instinctive potentialities. Her vaakhs reveal that she was deeply immersed in the subtleties and turns of Shaiva-thought and had acted out the Shaiva-Yoga praxes for ascension to the state of identity with Shiva, the Absolute in non-dual philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism. She took to Shaiva thought because it was widely current at popular level and dominated the intellectual discourse of the times she was born in and lived through. Sanskrit was the dominant idiom through which the contemporary knowledge was broadly mediated. That is how Lalla-Ded vaakhs amply testify to her firm grasp of Sanskrit language and its subtle nuances. In her position as a conscious poet she had studied almost with diligence 'Satva-Chintamani' of Bhatta Narayan and 'Shiva-stotravali' of Acarya Utpaldev. The two literary works were mainly responsible to resolve the palpable conflict between Shaiva thought and devotion (bhakti) and thus had enlarged the domain of Shaiva thought by making Shiva a staple subject of devotion, otherwise deemed to militate against the thesis of non-dualism.

Lalla-Ded chose to pour out her poignant utterances, spiritual in content, in Kashmiri language and not in the idiom of Sanskrit. It has often been said about Lalla-Ded that she deliberately ignored Sanskrit as the language of the learned and expressed herself in Kashmiri as the popular language. But, it is pertinent to refer to Bilhan Pandit, 10th century historian and poet, who categorically conveys that Sanskrit was a popular language, even women-folk spoke it in addition to Prakrit and local dialect, desh bhasha. Sanskrit and local dialect, as in other parts of India, have had a symbiotic relationship and Sanskrit as a highly developed language broadly reinforced the local dialect in its over-all growth and enrichment in terms of linguistic parameters. Alive to the Sanskritic tradition Lalla-Ded had a natural bonding with the literary tradition of Kashmiri. The Chumma-sampredai verses and Mahanai Prakash of Shiti Kanth do substantiate that there had been a continuous tradition of writing in Kashmiri of the shade it had evolved into through a formative process of linguistic evolution. It is apt to say that the established tradition had a history of evolution which is completely lost to us as a consequence of Cultural Vandalism resorted to by the foreign band of Sayyid-Sufis motivated to reduce Kashmir to an Iranian Colony.

The well-founded tradition, both literary and philosophical, that Lalla-Ded inherited as a precious legacy largely moulded her whole being, trajectory of her thought perspectives and pattern of her poetic expression. Her vaakhs indicate that Lalla thirstily drank at the fountain of Shaiva thought which formed a valuable part of the tradition she was a recipient to. She ardently worked out Shaiva-Yoga praxes that had wide acceptability in the rich spiritual tradition of Kashmir. The form of vaakh that she chose as a vehicle to give vent to her emotion-packed experiences that she had lived through during an arduous quest of Shiva was already in vogue and usage. It is fanciful to portray her as a person who broke down in sheer angst the ramparts of tradition and bolted away in quest of vistas, un-charted and unexplored. As an exceptional person of intellectual and poetic faculties Lalla-Ded pinnacled the rooted tradition through the gems of vaakhs that have a dazzle of impeccable artistic perfection. Lalla-Ded, in fine, was a perpetuator of tradition and established her brilliance as a miracle within the bounds of the same tradition.

The miracle of Lalla-Ded was highly inspiring and had deep impact in shaping the broad cultural responses on part of the succeeding generations of Kashmiris. The tradition, literary and philosophical, finessed by her has not waned in any way despite the emergence of a culture that annihilates symbols, motifs and hall-marks that have linkages with the past of Kashmir.

Lalla-Ded has firmly stood the ground, both as a spiritualist and master poet. She has been famous and legendary, not so now in our times, but had attained a summit of eminence and status of a legend in the very times she lived and sonorously sang her amazing couplets with epic souls to the inhabitants of Sharda-peeth, Kashmir renowned as an abode of knowledge and learning.

The younger contemporary of Lalla-Ded, popularly known as Nund Rishi, was the first to acknowledge the tradition of Lalla-Ded. Though pitted against the formidable foreign Sayyid-sufis in tight strangle-hold of Muslim state power, Nund Rishi basked undeterred in the luminosity and spiritual brilliance of Lalla-Ded. He in total submission prays to a Hindu god (diva) to bestow upon him the same boon (vara) that he had bestowed upon Lalla-Ded, the inhabitant of Padmanpore (Pampore). Nund Rishi had the sure feel that Lalla-Ded had drunk an elixir (amrit) that had immortalised her and had freed her from the rotating wheel of life and death. Without a shade of equivocation he accepts her as a divine incarnation of God on earth (avatar) which overtly speaks volumes for his own faith, religious beliefs and credos. Calling her an 'avatar' is not just a tribute to her, but is a frank and full-throated expression of his acceptance of and allegiance to Lalla-Ded's entire spectrum of belief-systems, spiritual axiology, non-violence and Shaiva-Yoga praxes for self-recognition (atma-pratyabhijjna).

There are echoes and resonances of Lalla-Ded in the shrukhs (slokas) of Nund Rishi who in no way can equal or rival his predecessor in poetic excellences and dazzling flashes of thought. 'Yakh tulkatur ta sheen, byon byon paeda kar ashyan, yamath khotukh pur kin rava, tamath timath tryan akuy gava', a shrukh of Nund Rishi, though in its nuances reflective of Shaiva thought, is a pale imitative version of Lalla-Ded vaakh, 'turi salil khot tai ture....shiva mai chara-char zag pashya'

Nund Rishi traversing the trail of Lalla-Ded is fully aware that duality is the source of world, all its pains and sorrows. The mission of a seeker is to cut asunder the shackles of duality that cause a deep chasm between man and God. One who attains to a position of identity with Shiva is certain to ferry across the ocean of world. Says he –

doyat travith paan yus mande
sui zon sam saras kande zava,
par ta paan yus hurry vyande
sui bava synande tarith aava.

Who abandons the meshes of duality
and churns his limited self,
he alone is really born in the world.
Who cognises his essence in his mind
he alone goes across the ocean of world.

Translation by M.L. Koul

Yoked to the powerful tradition of Lalla-Ded we can safely put that Nund Rishi as a borrower and beneficiary has tried to design many of his shrukhs after the thought content and manner of Lalla-Ded, whom he in all faith calls an 'avatar'. In sheer imitation of Lalla-Ded he dwells upon the theme of moderation in matters of eating as a metapor for worldly joys and pleasures and exhorts his own self to beware of ravenous or compulsive eating. He writes –

Khyama khyama karan yad no ayam
heer zuva yutuy khyata
kaali khyomut gachi zaya
hee zava payas pyata

I ate and ate without satiation,
O my body, put a stop to eating,
All thou eatest shall go to waste, at last.
Retrieve thyself, my soul.

Translation by B.N. Parimoo

As revealed by his genuine shrukhs Nund Rishi was a rishi in the vedic connotation of the word. Like the traditional rishis whom he has detailed with their austere ways of life, Nund Rishi also trudged his way to the dense forests in pursuit of God under a misconception that seclusion of the forests would quicken the process of recognition of his intrinsic reality as God. A stage came when it dawned on him that such a manner of asceticism was of no use and succour in matters spiritual. Echoing Lalla Ded, he says –

nasr baba janglan khasun gayam khamee
mea dop yi asi bada yabadat.
sara aas karyn kuni kath

O Nasar, surely was it a mistake
to trudge into the jungles,
Took it as a great means of worship
aim was to cognise the entity of God.

Translation by M.L. Koul

The real Nund Rishi lies buried in such shrukhs (slokas) as are couched in archaic Kashmiri, but have been left un-evaluated for fear that a new Nund Rishi might resurrect who would shatter his smoke-screened image that has been deliberately constructed by those very people who refused to hand over his shrukhs in sharda script recorded by Kati Pandit, a scholar of Sanskrit, to Dr. Grierson who was ultra keen to sift and sieve his shrukhs for an authentic edition of them in the manner he had done in case of Lalla-Ded. Prof. P.N. Push in an article published in a book titled 'Nund Rishi' had drawn attention of genuine scholars to the dire need of presenting Nund Rishi in the relevant context of Lalla-Ded tradition. The repertoire of shrukhs that has come my way establish Nund Rishi profusely using the same yoga-related terminology that we find in the vaakhs of Lalla-Ded. Muladhar, Kundalini, lama-cakra, sahasrar, shashikal are the fare of such shrukhs. Commentators keen to keep his image stuck to a particular religious creed have skirted away the issue of literary and spiritual evaluation of such shrukhs and have labelled them as 'samskriti' or 'shastra', which Prof. J.L. Koul, a brilliant and unrivalled scholar of Kashmiri language and literature, has denounced as absurd.

Rupa Bhavani, famously known as Alkeshvari, stands out as a devout poet much in the tradition of Lalla-Ded. She in all faith followed the trail that was foot-printed by Lalla-Ded in the realms of spirituality, yoga, philosophy and poetic expressions. Jonraj and Srivar who have graphically recorded the holocaust of Kashmiri Hindus during the Sultanate period have not recorded the historicity of Lalla-Ded as a civilisational sentinel of Kashmir. The credit goes to Rupa Bhavani, who unequivocally acknowledges Lalla-Ded as her supreme preceptor, sat-guru. Says she –

shuddham atyant vidhyadharam
lal naam lal param gvaram

The purest, exemplar of spiritual knowledge,
My great guru, of name Lalla.

Translation by M.L. Koul

Rupa Bhavani as a devotee of Shiva, whom she calls Parmatma, was given to dyan, dharna, and tapsya and had selected many places for the purpose. All the places where she meditated and acted out many yoga-related methodologies are calm, silent and serene, situated in soothing physical environs, thus conducive to spiritual ascension. Chashma Sahibi (Jyestha Rudra), Lar, Manigam and Vaskura are known places of her meditation. These places held in great esteem by spiritualists of all hues and devotees of Rupa Bhavani have been centres of pilgrimage for commoners seeking spiritual guidance and solace. But, sadly, the Muslim terrorists and their unreasoned supporters have desecrated or destroyed most of these centres of Shaiva spiritualism.

Rupa Bhavani who lived in Mughal times was known as a great spiritualist and her stock in public esteem was very high. A Muslim of the name of Shah Qalandar, said to be a saint, drew her attention by asking her name. She said, 'Rouf'. Shah Qalandar, a Muslim given to the religious ideology of conversions, pointedly said, 'If you cross over, you will turn into gold'. She shot back, 'If you cross over, you will turn into 'mokhta, a pearl'. The double entendre conveys that he would attain mukhti, self-realisation. The dialogue brings out the basic difference between the religious faiths of Hindus and Muslims, one is a non-proselytising creed and the other is a proselytising faith. The Hindu saint sought his cross-over for realisation of his intrinsic essence and the Muslim saint for her conversion to Islam.

Rupa Bhavani was a shaivite in her world-view and as such as a practitioner sought for union with Shiva through the same methodologies that her sat-guru had blazed for her. Shiva, to her, is sahaj, omni-present, all-pervading and self-born. With her gaze turned inwards she is keen to have His blissful union as 'param gati', which is mukhti, self-recognition in Shaiva lexicon.

Says she –

sahaj sarvatra vyapi svoreth vicharyam
bahubal svabhava eekant svyambhu parmakari
antar mukhi dresthi nervan rahysa tati parmagati

Innately natural, all-pervading, all powerful,
indivisible, self-born, manifest in all forms,
is Parmeshwar (God), one to be meditated upon
in mind and that unravels the mystery and is the
key to param-gati (condition of one-ness with God).

Translation by M.L. Koul

Rupa Bhavani was a yogini who through regular Shaiva yoga had awakened her kundalini, which remains coiled at muladhar, but is ever luminous. She had sublimated her prān-apān processes through regular courses of prānāyām and stilled her mind which otherwise remains disturbed through varied distractions. Kundlini through such practices moves upwards through six-cakras and touches sahasrār, which is the seat of nectar (amrit). Kundlini as per Shavites is the seat of Shiva and is the cause of manifestation. Says Rupa Bhavani –

shuddyokht muladhari kundli mandli gavri
sed arth sukham soshupti cakra virakhi shanta dhari
antarmukhi dreshti nirvan rahasya tati paramgati !

Who rouses kundalini, round in shape,
through muladhar, svadhisthan, manipur,
anahat, vishudhi, Ajna attains a state of
peace. With his gaze inverted within he realises
Ishvar, ever immersed in His own Anand & lives
a state of self-cognition.

Translation by M.L. Koul

A seeker who has realised himself has not to take to rudraksha-maala for Jap nor has he to meditate on a mantra. For such a soul there are no hopes to be cherished. He rises above the meaningless distinctions of kula (family) and gotra. He permanently resides in sahasrār and non-dual naad and bindu. Says she —

ludra buchha na aasa na gutri na bashi
na kuli na kretyam mahanand rupam
shyayam thaan vaasi aadi sarva madhyam
antarmukhi dreshti nervaan rahasya tati param gati

A self-realised soul lives a condition
transcending ordinary Japa with rudrachamala,
mundane hopes, considerations of family & clan,
And remains immersed in sahasrasar, non-dual
bindu and nad.

Translation by M.L. Koul

The poetic language of the poet is predominantly Sanskrit that is laced with apt word and phrase. There is a sprinkling of Persian words that had formed a part of Kashmiri language by the time she burst out her vaakhs. Her vaakhs are not 'lacking in spontaneity and flow, yet she is less comprehensible than her poetic master, Lalla-Ded'.

Parmanand, the unrivalled poet of vatsun and leela, is a devotee of Lord Krishna and uses his immense poetic acumen and fervour in depicting multifarious phases of Lord Krishna's life in the world, actually a divine incarnation of Vishnu. He is unmatchable in sweetness and beauty of language and apt use of words and phrases to generate the rasa of devotion. He has described Shiva after the Puranic style and worships Him the same way as he worships Lord Krishna.

Equally in the line of Lalla-Ded tradition Parmanand as an insightful poet has brought out the uniqueness of Lalla-Ded in a verse as a yogini who dwelt in dwadashant mandala, realised anāhat nāḍ and nād and bindu and thus attained a state of Supreme Anand, beauteous bliss. Says Paramand -

Lallishwari yi yuga aas sadaran
dadashant mandal manz kuni zani
anahatnad bend om prazanavan
pravan anand aam pana vani

Practising yoga Lalleshwari living

alone in dwadashant mandal recognised
anahat, naad, bindu & Oum & attained,
a state that is blissful.

Translation by M.L. Koul

The Shaiva metaphysics of Shiva and Shakti, pratyabhijjna maha-vakya of 'so-ham', 'ajapa jap', shashi-kala, nad-bindu, dyan-dharna, jnān and moksạ as self-recognition are the lexicon of Parmanand, who as an ardent devotee (bhakta) is in quest of his parmatma, shiva or Krishna for spiritual union. Says he about 'ajapa gayatri' –

Om bhur bhuva svaha shiva shombhu
ajapa gayatri soham su

There are a number of Muslim poets who cherished the spiritual brilliance of Lalla-Ded and wax eloquent in their appreciation of Lalla-Ded as a yogini par excellence. The spiritual personality of Lalla-Ded and her tremendous poetic faculties have been a source of great inspiration for them. Despite the syndrome of 'dislocated sensibilities' they have by and large stuck to their race-memory and the treasure-trove of cultural inheritance. Shams Faqir, Nyama Saab, Asad Parray, Wahab Khar, Ahad Zargar, Svacchha Kraal et al are the poets who have resounding echoes of Lalla-Ded vaakhs in their poetic expressions. Mulādhār, Shashikal, Hridai, Sat, Paan Praznav, Jnān and similar word-hoard of yoga and other concepts of Shaiva thought form an essential part of their poetic consciousness. Their utterances have a consensual approval at mass level, but there is an order of thought that has rejected them as non-conformist. Some of them were spurned as heretics. Some of them migrated from their original places of birth and took shelter in areas where they had a support-base among the Kashmiri Pandits.

To camouflage their real identity as natives they have been burdened with the tag of sufis, which trickily uproots them from their native soil. In a study of such poets Amin Kamil titled his books as 'Sufi Shairi'. Moti Lal Saqi also made a fruitful contribution to the editing of the works of such poets with glossaries explaining the words belonging to the domain of Yoga and Shaivite philosophy. Very lately attempts have been made to interpolate spurious materials into their works which distort their real image as poets in the tradition of Lalla-Ded.

The appellation of 'shastar' or 'samskriti' for the poetic materials of these poets is inapt and inappropriate for it does not relate the poetic expressions of these poets to the integrated personalities which they had. What they have uttered is assigned to their sufistic thought and Samskriti is just there to be kept apart as something incidental to them, not integral to them as poets.

Nunda-rishi on Lalla-Ded

The Lalla of Padmanpor-she drank
Her fill of divine nectar;
She was indeed an avatar of ours.
O God, grant me the self-same boon.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Shamsfaqir on Lalla-Ded

Lalla merged her prān in the Transcendent;
For while ostensibly went to bathe
At the sacred shrine of Shurayar Ghat,
With a leap & a bound she jumped across
To where there is none other than God.

Translation by Prof. J.L. Koul

Rahim Sopori on Lalla-Ded

Lalla God-intoxicated as she was
Abandoned the mundane world,
The pursuit of Reality made her mad,
The world is nothing but insubstantial

Translation by Prof. M.L. Koul

Nyama Saab on Lalla-Ded

Lalla slayed the demon of false ego
Entered she the place of worship and
got absorbed in her own temple of heart
Therefrom she took a flight and soared
high above in the skies (of her own consciousness)

Translation by Prof. M.L. Koul

CHAPTER I

1. 'Sunyavad is one of the most important schools of Buddhism. Nagarjun cannot be called its founder because it was present before him in the Mahayan Sutras, some of which are prior even to Ashvagosh and in Ashvagosh. Nagarjun is only the first systematic expounder of Sunyavad. However, it is to his glory that he seized these threads and wove them into unity'.

   Dr. Chandradhar sharma, A critical survey of Indian Philosophy, Moti Lal Banarasidas, Delhi, 1964.
2. Madhyamic-Karikās.
3. The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1955.
4. Savra Jnān Kriyā Sambandmayam Paripurnam svatantryam, Shiva-Sutra Vimarsini, Khemraj, Part I, P.6.
5. Sambpanchashika, translation by Prof. N.K. Gurtu, Penman Publishers, 1998.
6. The word tantra is derived from root 'tan', which means to expand 'tanyate vistaryate jnanam iti tantram'.

CHAPTER II

1. a) Iha khalu parmeshvarah prakāshātma
   b) Prakashash cha vimarsa svabhavah
   c) vimarshonam vishvakaren vishvaprakashen vishva samharen cha akretimaham iti saphurnam

   Para-praveshika by Khemraj, translation & exposition by Prof. Nila Kant Gurtu.

2. Pratyabijjna Hrdyam by Khemraj, translation & exposition by Dr. Jaidev Singh, P. 5.

3. a) outline of Indian Philosophy by M. Hiriyana.
   b) Indian Philosophy by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Vol-II.

4. Sarva eva shivah sthitah

   Somanand, shiva-dreshti

5. atma eva sarvabhaveshu sphuratnirvrat chit vibhu, anirudh
   Ichha prasrah prasrat drik-kriya shiva,

   Somanand, Shiva-dreshti, I, 2.

6. bharupam paripurnam

   svātmani vishrantito mahā-ānandam

   Ichha samvit karnai

   nirbharitam anant shakti paripurnam

   Parmarth sar -10-11

7. akulam shiva iti ukhtam kulam shaktir prakirtitah

   kulākul anusandhane nipunah kaulikah priye

   Kularnav-tantra

8. a) Kaulàchàr was practised in Kashmir by the Shaivas who were highly cultivated in the Kaulāchār praxes. Bhagvan Abhinavagupta considered it as the most sophisticated of all āchārās (uttamum kaula matam).
   b) Bhaskar Rai, a scholar of Tantras, defines a kaul as:-

   Kaulam shaktir iti prokhtam akulam shiva uchyate,

   kulākula sambandah kaulam iti abhideyate.

CHAPTER III

1. grinati updashyati tatvikam artham iti guru,
   Khemraj, Shiva-sutra vimarsini
2. agād samshai ambodhi sam uttaran tārīneem –
   Bhat Kallat, Spand-karika
3. sah guru matsamah prokhto mantra-virya prakāshakah–
   Malinivijai Tantra.
4. Shakti chakram yadeva ukhtam guru vakhtram tadev uchyate
   ibid.
5. Ramkanthiya Tika (commentary)
6. Varnatmakah sarve sarve varna shivatmakah mantra.

CHAPTER IV

1. Satyarth Prakash
2. raso-aham apsu kaunteya prabha asmi shashi-suryo,
   pranvah sarva vedeshu shabdah khe paurusham nrshu.
   Sloka 8, chapter 7
3. yad akhsharam ved vidho vadanti,
   vishanti yad yatyo veetraagā.
   Sloka 11, chap. 8

4. aum iti akhsharam brahma vyaharan mām anusumran,
   yah prayāti tya jan deham sah yaati parmam gati.
5. shiva-sutra, translated by Dr. Jaidev Singh, Para pravesheka translated by Dr. T.K. Zadoo.
6. Sambpanchashikha, verse - 2.
7. ibid, verse-7.
8. Stuti-kusmanjali, 1, 6.
9. Sambpanchashikha, translated by Prof. N. Kanth Gurtu.
10. Gita-Samgraha.

CHAPTER V

1. Yoga-darshanam, 1, 2
2. Ibid, 1.1
3. Bhagvatgeeta, 2, 48
4. Ibid
5. Lights on yoga
6. mantrayogo layashcheva hathyogastatheva cha,
   rajyogashchaturthah syat yoganam utmastu sah.
   Dattatreya yoga, 18, 19
7. dhyanenatmani pashyanti kechitatmanam atmana,
   anye sankheyen yogen karmayogena chapre.
   Bhagvatgeeta, 3, 24

8. sanyasaha karmayogash cha nishreyaskar ubav

   ibid, 5, 2

9. yoga-darshan, 2, 29

10. Buddhist Savants of Kashmir, Advaitvadhini Koul, History of Kashmir, P.N. Bamzai.

11. Iti praktito mayā sugat esha margo navah

    Ishvarpraytibhijjna karika, 4, 1.

12. Kashmir Shaivism, Dr. Baljee Nath Pandit, page 212.

13. Ihsvar-Pratyabhijjna Vimarsini, III, 12.

14. Tantra-Sar, Abhinavgupta, page-10.

15. Ascent of Self, prof. B.N. Parimoo, Lalla Vakyani, Dr. Grierson,

CHAPTER VI

1. It is the view of Prof. Nila Kanth Gurtu who made it explicit to the author during his illuminating lecture on Pratyabhijjna Hrdyam.

2. Sivadrsti, v-118-20.

3. Ibid, IV-118-20

4. Ishvar-Pratyabhijjna Karika, 2&3.

5. Ishvar-Pratyabhijjna Vimarsini

6. The Doctrine of Recognition, Dr. R.K. Kaw, p-109.

7. Ihaapi presidh puran sidhant agamamanuman adhi vidhit puran shakti svabhave ishvare sati svātmanā abhimukhi

bhute tat prati sandhana jnanam udeti, nunam sah eva ishvaroham iti.

Ishvar Pratyabhijjna vimarsini, 1, 21

8. Bhaskar, a well-known commentator of Shaiva thought.

CHAPTER VII

1. Bhagvatgita - Chapter 3, 9
2. Ibid – Chapter 3, 19.
3. An outline of Indian Philosophy.
4. History of Sanskrit Literature, Krishnachaitanya
5. Lecture on Vedas
6. Hymns of Alvars, Hooper.
7. Hindu Phenomenon, Giri Lal Jain
8. Shivastrotravali, Chapter, 9, V-9.
9. Ibid, Chapter-1, V-II

CHAPTER VIII

1. Parmarth-sar, P-32.
2. Sambpanchashikha, Commentary by Prof. N.K. Gurtu, P-93.
3. Ibid, P-239.
4. Parmarth-Sar

5. Ibid, Karika-60.

6. The author is highly indebted to Prof. N.K. Gurtu who explained to him the esoteric meaning of mahavreties in detail during an inter-action at the study centre of Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan at Rajbagh, Srinagar prior to the Kashmiri Pandit expulsion in 1990 by the Muslim Crusaders.

7. Tantra-page 11

AVAILABLE WORKS ON LALLA-DED

1. ***Lalla-Ded*** — *Prof. Jaya Lal Koul*
2. ***Ascent of Self*** — *Prof. B.N. Parimoo*
3. ***Lalla-Vakyani*** — *George Grierson*
4. ***The Word of Lalla*** — *Sir Richard Temple*
5. ***Sanskrit Translation of Sixty vākhs of Lalla-Ded*** — *Rajanak Bhasker*
6. ***Seventy-five vākhs of Lalla-Ded*** — *Pt. Anand Koul Bamzai*
7. ***Amrit-Vāni*** — *Pt. Ram Joo Kalla*
8. ***Lalla vākhs*** — *Pt. Jia Lal Koul Jalali*
9. ***Lalleshwari vākya Rahasya*** — *Pt. Gopi Nath Raina.*
10. ***Lalla-Ded*** — *Prof. R.N. Koul*
11. ***Hundred Lalla-Ded vākhs translated into Hindi*** — *Pt. Sarvanand Chiragi*
12. ***Lalla-vākh published by J&K Academy*** — *edited by Prof. J.L. Koul & Prof. Nanda Lal Koul Talib*
13. ***Lalla-Ded*** — *Dr. S.K. Raina*
14. ***Lalla-Ded*** — *A special issue of 'Koshur Samachar' published by Kashmiri Pandit Organisation, New Delhi.*
15. ***To the other Shore : Lalla's Life & Poetry*** — *Jai Shree Kak*

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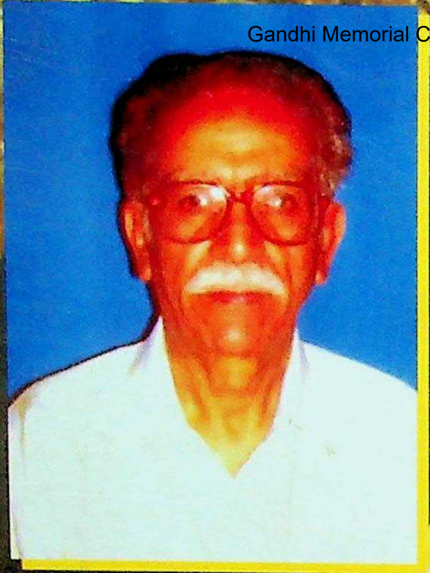

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4. Lalla-Ded
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   A Critique